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Hidalgo

By Beatrice Ravenel

“**H**OW shall I know that you love me,
How shall I surely tell?”
Lady, take me for lover,—
I hate so well!

The rose-tree that drunken with morning
Laid ruffian hands on your gown . . .
Did you wonder whose envious dagger
Hacked it down?

Should the insolent sunlight affect you
Leering with covetous eye,
I should rip him, the glory of noonday,
Out of the sky.

The youth that has clambered at evening
Over your orchard walls . . .
The river gentles his body
Under the falls.

Did you play me false by an eyelash,
That night should I clasp you in Hell . . .
Lady, take me for lover,—
I love so well!

The SMART SET

The
Aristocrat
Among
Magazines



Notes On the American Gentlewoman

By *Thomas Beer*

I

Her Humor

SOME years ago I sat between Mrs. J. Heminway Jones and Mrs. Gerald Potterhanworth at a performance by the Ballet Russe in a large city. Gowns were low that season, and I had nervous, Victorian moments whenever either lady applauded some muscular exploit of Nijinsky, who appeared draped in a single strip of silk. His female associate wore a rather coarsely woven web of false pearls. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Potterhanworth agreed that the local outcry against the ballet was mere prudery. The next morning Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Potterhanworth signed a petition praying that the boys of the city's High School shouldn't be allowed to swim in the High School tank unless dressed in full bathsuits. . . .

II

Her Artistic Convictions

I took Miss Cobbleshope to tea in the Marengo because the ceiling of the tea room there pleases me. Miss Cobbleshope looked at it and then murmured, "How utterly vulgar!" We were joined, a moment later by a French boucher looking for food. He rolled an eye at the ceiling and remarked, "Quel beau plafond!" . . . Last week my aunt Heraklia took Miss Cobbleshope to tea in the Marengo. Miss Cobbleshope observed, "I'm quite mad about this room. Isn't the ceiling exquisite?"

III

Her Democracy

MRS. JULLANDER OUTHWAITE'S father began life as a farmhand in hither Ohio and her mother was the

daughter of an undertaker in lower Connecticut. I met Mrs. Outhwaite strolling down Park Avenue with her twin daughters, Sybilla and Leontine, aged ten. Mrs. Outhwaite smilingly told me: "The girls are so excited. Tomorrow's their birthday and they're going to ride in a street car. They've never been in one and they're really quite thrilled. . . ."

IV

Her Aplomb

MRS. ADDISON SEYMOUR is noted for her urbanity. When presented to Pius X, she said, "Oh, how d'you do? I once met your father, Leo Thirteenth. . . ."

V

Her Patriotism

MRS. BALLANTYNE'S only son, Hubert, was killed in France. I took Walter Vane to call on the poor woman. Walter is a Captain of Marines. He left me in Mrs. Ballantyne's drawing

room. She sighed, looking after him, and said: "What a stunning uniform that is, isn't it? . . . I do wish Hubert had been in the Marines!"

VI

Her Love of Music

I TOLD Mrs. Courtney Gelthorpe that I thought "Electra" an over-rated opera. She responded: "So do I. One does feel that Strauss is morally unsound, doesn't one? Fancy putting matricide to music! . . ."

VII

Her Social Insight

It struck me as rather beastly that the poor East Side Jewess should be jailed for making a speech which wouldn't have bothered the police in London, Paris or Vienna. Evadne Hutchinson stopped painting her upper lip and objected: "But women of that class don't mind going to jail, do they? Aren't they used to that sort of thing?" . . .



THE wonders of science—A woman sending a cablegram half-way across the world in a few hours, to convey birthday greetings.



IT is salutary to reflect that, to the monkeys in the zoo, it is humanity that prances behind the bars.



LOVE, too, should be an adventure among masterpieces.



The Steward of God

[A Complete Novelette]

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

CHAPTER I

THE Reverend Beverley Mitchell had never been more magnificently daring than on that Sunday morning when he preached his sermon against the divorce evil. No Old Testament prophet could have raked his hearers over the coals with greater fury. The well-dressed congregation shrank in terror from the fiery scourge; but at the same time it was quite obvious that they enjoyed the drubbing. Nothing gives people a smugger sense of importance than to be denounced in picturesque terms from a pulpit.

Long before Mitchell had ceased his breath-taking diatribe, the occupants of the most expensive pews in his church had been branded as "beasts of promiscuity and lust," and as "insatiate cravers of the sensual sting." The clergyman had deliberately thrown overboard politeness and the finicky primness of present-day speech. He used robust biblical terms that contributed much to the forcefulness of his polemic. Yes, he *did* set his flock gasping more than once; but the gasps were in every case as unmistakably applauding as hand-clapping.

Mrs. Fane—who'd divorced two husbands and would probably divorce two more before she'd finished—sat with downcast eyes in her pew and watched the timid fluttering of her bosom. She was luxuriating in a pretty repentance. It pleased her to think that the discourse of the morning was directed straight at her bowed head. She was

positive that everybody must be watching her. It was proof of her fair-mindedness that, at the very moment when Mitchell was calling the "fashionable divorced woman who remarries" by a very stark name, she should have been reflecting, "I'll have him to dine next Friday." It was proof, too, of Mitchell's gentleness outside the pulpit, of his habit of throwing stones only in church, that Mrs. Fane should have had no doubt whatever of his accepting her invitation.

Everybody in the fine old edifice was tarred with the same brush. There were at least a dozen women present who, like Mrs. Fane, considered themselves the real heroines of the occasion. And as for the men! Each of them felt his chest swelling with a sorrowful pride. Sons of Belial flushed with insolence and wine! Predatory mammals of Wall Street! Yes, this fellow knew whereof he spoke, but, damn it all, how could one be expected—? Even the eminent and estimable among the worshippers to-day found that the flail in Mitchell's hand could sting; these staunch pillars of the church might not be directly involved in the evil of modern divorce, but most of them had cousins or children or people on their visiting-lists who *had* been through the insidious mill. So everyone quailed and confessed in silence, "There is no health in me;" and everyone was having a beautiful—almost a lark—time under the merciless rod of vengeance.

At the high point of his discourse,

Mitchell's glance swooped down on his hearers and darted through their close ranks like a flicker of destroying lightning. His voice boomed forth on a militant trumpet-note that set the high stone walls reverberating:

"Sin if you must; sin *openly*. Cast yourselves beyond the pale of respectable society; give your desires sway outside of wedlock. But when society reaches the point where it enables its members to commit adultery and, by the atrocious hypocrisy of divorce, to remain *inside* the protective barriers, then must the whole rotten edifice crash to its ruin. By the inspiration of Almighty God, I warn you to turn your backs on the specious rehabilitation of divorce and the resultant shameful marriage to your yesterday's paramour!"

Mrs. Fane cowered. For a moment, she had feared that the thunderous denunciation would bring the church down about her shell-pink ears. Old Gregory Forbes compressed his lips and nodded his head in benign approval of Mitchell's boldness; he was beginning to see himself in a new light. All the years he'd been roaming about with transparent candour *outside* of wedlock had suddenly taken on ethical significance in Forbes's eyes. Today at last, his conduct had been stamped with ecclesiastical sanction—

All eyes were of a sudden raised solicitously to the pulpit.

There, bowed over the reading-stand, the Reverend Beverley Mitchell was struggling to go on with his sermon. His handsome face was distorted under the goad of grief. He had put one slender hand over his eyes to hide his passionate surrender. Doggedly, stubbornly he forged ahead through a half dozen sentences, his voice becoming ever more husky, more choked with emotion. Then, powerless to resist the flood of anger and sorrow and pity that had welled up within him, he covered his face.

Crouching above his flock, Mitchell struggled with himself, fought down his weakness and at last conquered it. Then, his voice hushed to a whisper of

supplication, he continued his discourse.

His wrath had faded out. He was pleading now with his people; he was addressing them as defenseless children, as lambs to be cajoled by the shepherd's tenderness. Nothing remained in his heart but a yearning sympathy for these pathetically erring women costumed by Bendel and these tragic financiers in their new suits from Poole. The sermon wound up on a note of commiseration.

"Forgive me if I have seemed to spurn you, to shut my heart against you," came his last thrilling words. "I have looked on you in your apparent arrogance of material power; I have believed you hardened and stony. For a time, I was blinded to the struggle of your lot. I saw you divorcing and remarrying in a shameless defiance. But no! These actions come from a confused unhappiness. Let me *teach* you the mistake of that revolt. Now I know that, if there be pathos in the bread-line, there is a more poignant pathos—to put it baldly—in the automobile line. Forgive me, my people, and come to me for support."

At the very first word of that sermon, the Reverend Beverley Mitchell had felt himself caught up and whirled aloft to the heights. This was his apogee, he somehow knew. Inspired as he was even beyond his wont, he didn't at the time consider the effect of his words upon his future. He was being swept darkly and afar, yes; but he shut his eyes modestly and refused to measure the diminishing distance between himself and the remote pinnacle of a bishopric.

Like all really fine actors, he was lost in the histrionism of the moment. Sentimentally moved by the richness of the scene, finding a luxurious anguish in counting the drops of his life-blood (he'd been told by some doctor that this sort of emotional strain would kill him yet), he had let his torrential eloquence exhaust him.

He had experienced the utter joy of self-sacrifice. So, when the thing was

over, he felt a thrill of faintness go through him. He had spent himself for these parishioners of his; and he told himself with an excited joy that he had thrown discretion to the winds, that it would be but natural now for the fickle, petted plutocrats to turn against him and cast him off. A typical payment for unflinching service! After twenty-five years of association with fashionable flocks, Mitchell should have realized that this public denunciation would make him only the more popular with his just and generous followers. He was in no mood at present, however, to admit of a diplomatic shrewdness; he'd put on the halo of martyrdom today and found it becoming. No Tappé creation in the pews could have tickled its wearer more completely.

While harrying and exhorting and cajoling the worshippers, the Reverend Beverley hadn't been conscious of them as individuals; they had run together mystically into a single soul that yearned in silence to be healed.

After the long prayer following the sermon had reached its close, however, the clergyman surprised himself in the act of picking out a face here and there and examining it. He let his eyes rest for a moment on Mrs. Wendell Tompkins. She was sitting bolt upright as usual, her capacious chest thrust out pompously above her confining corsets. On her weather-beaten, aggressive face there was an expression of domineering triumph.

It pleased this admirable woman to ignore the clergyman's carefully builded popularity and to consider each public appearance of his as a battle for recognition. She had long since taken him for granted as her own personal possession; with something pugilistic in her attitude, she backed him up every Sunday in what she persisted in believing to be a fight against overwhelming odds.

Today, catching his glance, she nodded her head brusquely at him three times, in token of her majestic favor. He had scored; or, to be more precise, *they* had scored. Mrs. Tompkins

always gave herself credit for a conspicuous share in his successes. Mitchell was a bit annoyed now at the self-importance of the woman.

Then suddenly he became aware that he was looking with a startled interest into another pair of eyes. With nervous haste, he suppressed a delighted smile. It was really no wonder he should have been taken aback and well nigh put off his guard. For this new pair of eyes seemed somehow out of place in the Reverend Beverley's house of worship; they were so merry, so sunny—they seemed, he reflected half-humorously, like the eyes of some jocund out-door creature. There was no Sabbath shadow about them. They took one out of New York and set one down in some pagan glade with Pan and his crew—

Mitchell bit his lips as the first muffled vibration of the organ, thrilling through the edifice, recalled him sternly to himself. Had he smiled, after all? The woman was smiling—there was no doubt about that. Sitting there in her neat cloth dress, with a little brown hat set at an audacious angle, she was giving him a glance of the frankest, most boyishly direct amusement.

Mitchell frowned and turned away from that challenging scrutiny. His halo had, as it were, got drunkenly cocked over one ear. Only by fixing his attention unflinchingly on Mrs. Tompkins could he bring himself back to the realities and get his imaginary head-gear straight.

CHAPTER II

ON Monday evenings, the Reverend Beverley Mitchell's "Round Table" assembled at the Parish House. The meetings of the "Round Table" were rollicking social affairs; in this atmosphere, the clergyman was unfailingly bluff and jolly, leaving behind him the pomp and circumstance of his calling and acting as master of the innocent revels.

From the beginning of his career,

Mitchell had had very definite ideas as to the proper management of boys' clubs. Indeed, he was a pioneer in lifting these organizations from the dreary slough they'd fallen into all over the country. Hadn't he, in his callow years, been a member of "The Young Men's Improvement Society," with its lugubrious meetings twice a month? He and the other unfortunate innocents would on these occasions be forced to listen to some itinerant and illiterate evangelist, who never failed to consign them all to the fiery pit. That sort of thing was scandalously bad for the manners and morals of the rising generation. So Mitchell had hit upon a scheme that brought him deserved fame.

He founded a boys' club that met only for gaiety and simple play. It was primarily a school of etiquette for the humbler boys of the parish and a training in democratic standards for the more privileged youngsters. The whole thing was set in a pale glow of Arthurian chivalry. There was no definitely religious air about the Society, but the pastor himself would on occasion admonish the members gently and skillfully, holding up to them the principles on which the original Round Table had been founded.

It was all very pretty and romantic and Tennysonian. There were tiny pages and slightly bigger neophytes; after so many years of good conduct, one was made a knight. During the Christmas season, the great jousts at Camelot were staged; in other words, there was a basket-ball tournament. Then came the picturesque ceremony when Mitchell, robed as King Arthur, bestowed the accolade on the deserving. Everybody appeared in costume—inexpensive little robes of tarlatan.

Of course, anything remotely resembling class distinction was tabooed. The boys to be knighted wore short jackets of cotton-batting that passed for ermine. On one occasion, a high and mighty matron of the church had arrayed her son in real ermine—pieces rescued from her opera-cloak when it

was done over by Bergdorf-Goodman. But Mitchell wouldn't *hear* of such arrogant snobbery. He took tea with the mother and brought her around diplomatically to see the error of her ways.

On the Monday following the celebrated philippic against divorce, the Reverend Beverley and his "gentlemanly little chaps"—so the clergyman always spoke of them—were having a jolly Hallowe'en party in the Parish rooms.

It was a quaint old-fashioned affair. Mitchell was just one of the boys; he entered with a boisterous zest into each game—without once sacrificing his Arthurian dignity, however. His polite young followers would as soon have taken liberties with God Himself as with the rector. A divinity hedged this twentieth-century king, even when he ducked enthusiastically for apples. He got a lock of his hair wet, he growled with his mouth under water and made bubbles, he even splashed his ecclesiastical collar so recklessly that it wilted; but his adoring knights knew better than to push his head under. Any such infringement of etiquette would have meant a speedy expulsion from the famous club. The boys stood around with wide delighted eyes; and when Mitchell jumped up triumphantly with an apple-stem between his teeth, they all burst into admiring laughter. There was no doubt about it—the Reverend Beverley had the art of making himself protagonist in these parties.

Later in the evening, while Mitchell seated on a rolling-pin, was doing some very grotesque "stunt," he suddenly realized that the door of the room had been pushed open and the slim young woman with the merry eyes and the challenging smile was standing on the threshold.

At once, he got to his feet. Even after riding a rolling-pin, he could smooth out the folds of his dignity in a moment. He brushed the dust from his trousers, pulled down his waistcoat and stood confessed—the genial and decidedly aristocratic host about to welcome a privileged guest.

"Oh, Nick!" Mitchell put an indulgent hand on the shoulder of one of the boys. (He addressed all the club-members in intimate diminutives.) "It's your turn now with the pin, my boy. Good luck to you."

A succession of fatherly pats on Nick's back followed. Then the Reverend Beverley hurried up to the woman in the doorway.

"I'm not intruding?" Her voice was frank and friendly. "The boys won't get shy? I don't want to dampen their enthusiasm." She looked at him with exactly the same air of boyish amusement he had noticed the previous day.

"Oh, the nice little chaps like to have visitors," Mitchell assured her with expansive cordiality. "It's part of their training in manners, you see. I'm always glad to have them brought in contact with the other sex. It polishes off so many crude angles, makes them real gentlemen. In this club, we very soon get them out of their self-consciousness."

"How interesting!" she cried. "Personally, though, I adore boys when they don't know what to do with their arms and legs. I think it's a good idea to keep them out of long trousers till they're fourteen and not to let them shave the moment they get downy. A certain amount of shame and sheepishness is good for them; don't you think so, Mr. Mitchell?"

He shook his head decisively. As an authority on the management of growing boys, he didn't relish criticism of his methods by frivolous women.

Still, he gave her an affable smile before correcting her—partly because she looked so disarmingly good-natured, partly because he wanted her to see that he *could* smile in a becoming way. He'd been pondering with some uneasiness his response in the pulpit the day before; and he had been just a bit afraid he might not have appeared to advantage.

"I'm sorry—but I don't agree with you," he remarked. "I honestly believe that a boy in the downy period is apt to become incurably surly and

morose unless he's given a razor right away. Sheepishness is bad for the poor fellow's manners."

"How you do dwell on manners!" she commented. "I've always rather distrusted polite people. My husband, for example, is a charming, courteous man—and *he's* too dishonest for words. One can't believe a thing George Willmott says."

She tossed off this information in all calmness. It was a matter-of-fact statement, not a prelude to wistful confidences.

"Oh, it's possible to be a perfect gentleman and still not be a *Christian* gentleman," Mitchell reminded her softly. "I teach my boys etiquette but I lay a sturdy foundation first."

"I have my doubts—even of Christian gentlemen," the woman reflected aloud. Then, with apparent irrelevance, she announced, "Your sermon was delightful, Mr. Mitchell—delightful. But eloquence puts me on the defensive, particularly eloquence of sound literary quality. I found myself picking flaws. You were so very ingenious that you started *me* off in the same line."

"Indeed?" Mitchell raised his eyebrows delicately. "I wasn't aware that I was being either eloquent or ingenious. I fear you're too clever for a plain man like me. You read into my sermon little tricks and graces that really weren't there at all."

Try as he might, he couldn't keep a tinge of asperity out of his voice.

She laughed her bright good-natured laugh. "Perhaps you didn't know how clever you were; or rather, perhaps you didn't *think* you knew."

"It's as I said," he caught her up sharply. "I'm a plain humdrum sort and I really can't combat a witty woman's sarcasm. You interpreted my poor sermon, you twisted it in your brilliant way—"

"Well," she interrupted him gaily, "I shan't quibble any longer. All I meant was that you weren't quite honest with yourself."

Mitchell stiffened, but before he could formulate his incisive protest the

woman had veered to an unequivocal topic.

"Oh, by the way!" she exclaimed, "I have some presents for the boys out in my motor."

She paused; then,

"They're fearfully of the earthy," she admitted. "Packs of cards and pipes for the really grown-up members; bats and ball-gloves and marbles for the downy ones— It does strike me now as a sporting array. I don't wish to arouse their gambling instincts."

Mitchell met this with dignity.

"You are most kind," he said, "*most* kind. The little chaps are a manly lot; you couldn't have chosen a wiser assortment of gifts. It's not my idea to train the coming generation to be blue-noses. Indeed, I make a point of smoking *with* the older boys. Pipes, that is; of course, cigarettes—"

He shook a disapproving head.

"Of course, cigarettes—" the woman echoed. "Though they *are* politer than pipes."

The hallowe'en games were called off and the presents distributed to an accompaniment of most polite acclaim from the manly young recipients. Mitchell himself had gone out to the motor and ushered in the parcel-laden chauffeur. He was bluff and cordial to the man, striking the nicest note of hail-fellow comradeship combined with easy superiority. His conduct was indeed a triumph of example to his impressionable charges.

"No vulgar equality," the clergyman seemed to be conveying. "Keep a servant in his place, remember—but do it cordially. After all, the poor things have feelings that no Christian gentleman would hurt."

The Reverend Beverley had been known to treat the fathers of some of his knights in just this way.

Mrs. Willmott, her eyes sparkling with amusement, watched the clergyman as he joked genially with her chauffeur and, making the rounds of his boys, dealt out to each a gift and an appropriate remark.

"You see how *delighted* they are, Mrs. Willmott," Mitchell remarked when the last little chap had been provided with his set of marbles. He waved an indulgent paternal hand over the eager group. "I thank you heartily—for them all."

Mrs. Willmott had of a sudden become reflective.

"Let me see," she murmured, giving the club-members a shrewd scrutiny. "That attractive lanky fellow—over there—is poor, isn't he? Comes from very humble parents?"

Mitchell nodded. "The nice boy is an orphan. He lives with an aunt, a queer old woman who does dress-making."

"And that little one in the corduroy trousers?" Mrs. Willmott pursued. "His people have nothing to boast of, so far as position goes?"

He laughed at this. "No indeed! The father sells newspapers; the mother—well—the less said of the unfortunate woman the better."

"But that arrogant young customer with blond curls? *He's* a privileged character?" She gave Mitchell a vivid smile.

"How discerning you are!" he acknowledged. "His parents are most charming people—aristocrats of the old school. You have an eye to standards of class and breeding."

She shrugged.

"Oh—one can tell from their clothes," she elucidated, a mocking gleam in her eyes. As a matter of fact, she had been able to judge the knights' status by Mitchell's suave presentation speeches. He had had a special tone of voice for the boys in the *Social Register*; and he'd picked out the shiniest pipes for the youngsters with money in their pockets.

Mitchell had caught the ironic note in her simple statement; it somehow annoyed him. She was evidently still criticizing his methods with the boys; she was indeed acting with decided rudeness.

They were silent for a moment; then she had held out a slim hand with her

usual air of frank camaraderie.

"The evening has been delightful, Mr. Mitchell," she remarked. "I congratulate you on your nice boys."

"Ah—but you must stay for our frugal little supper," he murmured. "We wait on the little chaps—a committee of young girls of the parish and myself." He looked straight at her. "But perhaps you will pick flaws even in that arrangement."

This barbed arrow pleased him; he wanted her to know that he *could* combat her sarcasm.

"Of course I'll stay and do my share of the waiting," she returned.

The suppers always brought the "Round Table" festivities to a pretty wind-up. There was a sentimental strain in Mitchell's make-up; he himself had admitted it often. The very sight of the ten girls—"the choicest, most fragrant flowers in the garden of my tending"—who composed his Committee had more than once fetched a queer lump into his throat.

Nothing brings home to one the pitiless struggle of human life more poignantly than a gathering of maidens with their feet on the threshold of womanhood. There they stand, buoyant, happy, bravely unafraid. What does the future hold for them of disillusion? So, Mitchell handled his Committee with the tenderest grace; he got a sad sort of satisfaction at such times in contemplating his own grossness.

"We men are not worthy to tie the latches of a young girl's shoes," he had told his boys many times.

Of course, his fragile and exquisite waitresses simply *adored* the clergyman. They fluttered about him in their plain white frocks; they chattered and babbled excitedly in their efforts to impress him. For all their youth and inexperience, they viewed the situation less reverently than he; they never lost sight of him as a good-looking man who might appreciate pretty faces.

The girls were an amazingly democratic crew. The moment they skipped out of their motors, they doffed their

social position like an irksome garment. Nothing existed for them but the business of waiting on table; they were as earnestly wrapped up in their menial duties as so many Childs employees whose living depended on their efficiency. They'd hardly got into the Parish House tonight before they proceeded to tie aprons over their white uniforms from the Betty Wales shop. They greeted the wide-eyed admiring boys with a charming affability. "How do you do, Charles?" "How are you, Michael?" "So glad your throat's better, James." Then they all clustered about the clergyman.

"Mama's so afraid the cakes she sent aren't flaky, Mr. Mitchell," a vivacious little blonde apologized. "The chef is getting stupider every day."

"André is so cross because I made him bake beans for us," another protested. "He says they don't have such awful messes in France. Oh, Dorothea, darling, please tie my apron for me; I never *can* get around to my back."

The clergyman lined them all up and presented them proudly to Mrs. Willmott. The roll-call was indeed an impressive one. "Miss Parsons, Miss King, Miss Stuyvesant, Miss Livingston, Miss Nelson—" So it went.

Mrs. Willmott was gracious to a degree.

"I remember years ago—before I went to Paris to live—I officiated at a children's party," she told them. "I managed the grab-bag. And you were all there. It was *your* birthday, Marcia Livingston."

The girls were delighted. Four of them got their arms around Mrs. Willmott's waist and whirled her out into the kitchen.

Supper was jolly, particularly for the attendants. The boys were a bit restrained, a bit too careful of their table-manners to be quite at ease. Indeed, the members of the "Round Table" seemed vaguely conscious that there was something queer about this topsy-turvy reversal of the social ranks, with the aristocrats of the parish thus

humbling themselves to wait upon the lowly.

The girls and the clergyman, however, displayed a vociferous gust for this particular kind of democracy. Mitchell, handing a platter heaped with baked beans, rallied the boys on their appetites and made consciously obvious jokes for the benefit of the "little chaps"; then he would bend over one of his waitresses and deliver himself of a neat epigram in the best aristocratic tradition.

With a furtive intensity, he watched Mrs. Willmott throughout the meal. She was busy and apparently impressed with the whole performance; she didn't seem to be picking flaws. Once, when Dorothea Strong cried, "Why Marcia Livingston, you're serving from the *right*, silly!" Mrs. Willmott's eyes twinkled roguishly. But that was all.

On the stroke of ten, the gathering broke up. Mrs. Willmott gave the Reverend Beverley a frank, firm handshake as she said good night.

"I'm always exactly as I've been this evening," she told him, "—neither better nor worse. Do come and have tea with me. I may be very good for you—one can't tell." With her eyes level in his, she smiled. "Every man needs a certain amount of judicious scolding."

In the brightness of her glance, Mitchell felt his disapproval, his sense of wounded dignity, melt to nothingness. He bowed low over her hand and murmured,

"You are most kind. I'm sure you'll be very good for me. Any day you set!"

"I'll call you on the telephone," she remarked as she turned away.

CHAPTER III

THE Reverend Beverley Mitchell had tea several times with Mrs. George Willmott. During his first visit he had looked about him with a veiled curiosity. Her apartment gave him an artistic satisfaction. It was spacious and cool, with a few fine landscapes on the

walls and just enough furniture to make each old piece imposing. The total absence of steam-heat and puffy upholstery was most refreshing. The windows were all open and a log-fire blazed on the hearth.

Mitchell found that his eyes were straying involuntarily to the door. He was curious about the dishonorable George; he was waiting with something like suspense for his gentlemanly entrance upon the scene.

Mrs. Willmott had read his thought. "You are watching for my husband," she remarked. "I believe he is in China now—though one can never be sure of him. But if he is in New York, he won't come here. We haven't seen each other for five years."

Again her information was quite matter-of-fact. Willmott had apparently long since dropped over her horizon. Her tone was friendly; she might have been talking of some chance acquaintance she had lost track of.

"Ah—you weren't—er—happy together?" Mitchell assumed a receptive air. Most of the women with whom he drank tea had some sort of plaintive appeal or confidence to make. Despite Mrs. Willmott's casual note, he had become at once the professional comforter.

"I am *exceedingly* sorry," he pursued.

"Oh, but you misunderstand," she cried in her clear ringing voice. "We *were* happy, George and I. The trouble was, we had so much of each other at first that we soon knew each other too thoroughly. There wasn't any more to learn, you see. Neither of us approved of stagnation—so we separated in perfect congeniality. George's lies got to be as transparent as truth; and *he* could guess out all my little weaknesses, too."

She was silent for a moment.

Mitchell examined her with an eager curiosity as she looked reflectively into the fire. Her musing smile showed that she was going over the past; she was picking out the jolly incidents of her life with George Willmott and enjoying

them. She wasn't the sort to hoard unpleasant memories and cherish old grievances—that was obvious.

She was wearing today a simple gown of dark blue serge that hung straight from the shoulders, with a loosely knotted sash. The short skirt and the plain white muslin collar made her appear very youthful; her figure was that of a slim, healthy girl, athletic and alert, with an undeveloped boyish compactness of outline. She seemed still in the budding period, as it were. Her face, however, was that of an intelligent woman of thirty. She wasn't made up. In spite of the fact that her expression was always gay and good-humored, she looked somehow thoughtful, as if she could meet any problem unshrinkingly and earnestly. Her features were clear-cut, the nose straight and thin, the lips a firm red line, the chin narrow and strong. Her dark brown eyes were absolutely without mystery; they were the most disarmingly candid eyes Mitchell had ever seen.

Mrs. Willmott was by no means beautiful; she was attractive, stimulating and transparently honest. With her, nobody could feel the baffled perplexity of a hopeless hunt after understanding. She was as open as the day. In that lay her tonic, invigorating charm.

Taking her eyes from the fire, she gave Mitchell her direct glance.

He lowered his own gaze to the floor in some confusion, but she betrayed not the slightest self-consciousness at discovering that he had been watching her.

"You know," she remarked, "I don't care a rap what a person's faults may be, if I find I like that person. Do forgive me, Mr. Mitchell, when I tell you you're never quite yourself. I really believe that clergymen have much less chance to be honest in this world than anybody else. You're not allowed to believe yourselves human beings; the people in your parishes would die rather than admit you're mere flesh and blood. Naturally you can't escape the general infection. It's a *shame*. So

many of you start out as such nice, serious young men. But you all die snobs. You're the only genuine survivors of the 'divine right' theory, now kings are extinct."

"Ah—but you *have* it in for us," he protested.

Today, however, he felt not the slightest annoyance at being insulted by her. She had piqued him already to a fascinated interest; he was finding something exhilarating in her humorous aspersions. Her air of frank good-comradeship took the sting from her words. She wasn't indulging in a capricious irony, she wasn't doing any cattish teasing. She believed what she said; her convictions—ridiculous, preposterous though they were—were the result of earnest study. It would be unkind, unchristian, not to hear her out.

"I have it in for you just now," she corrected him gaily, "—for you, the Reverend Beverley Mitchell. I'm not interested in the others. You see, I like you."

She nodded her head at him decisively. There wasn't a suggestion of coquetry or flattery in her attitude. "I like you very much indeed. I also see through you. You're no better than the common run; in fact, you're distinctly worse."

He laughed heartily.

"I must insist on your backing up a statement like that with *some* authentic evidence," he protested.

"Oh—I have proofs enough," she returned. "You play-act in the pulpit, Mr. Mitchell. You're consciously the hero of the morning worship at your church. You know you're good-looking, too; you manage your vestments as we women do our opera cloaks."

She mimicked him drolly, shaking out imaginary floating sleeves, then arranging fictitious muslin folds on her breast.

"Don't think, though, when I criticize you," she told him, "that I consider myself blameless. I have philanthropic instincts. I've—well—I've practically picked you up. I went to your

church to see if your photographs flattered you. If they *had*, I shouldn't have bought those presents for your boys; if they had, it would never have occurred to me that I might be good for you. I'm afraid my only conspicuous virtue is my straightforwardness."

She paused for a moment and looked at him keenly.

"Yes, you *are* a vain man," she resumed at length. "What I've just said has delighted you. If I can show you up, just a little, to yourself, I shall feel I have accomplished something."

They got on famously after that. By imperceptible degrees, the clergyman found his attitude toward himself undergoing a subtle veer. It was by no means a "showing up" that Mrs. Willmott effected; it was rather that she pricked his intelligence to a new understanding of himself. His sense of his own powers and intrinsic worth became heightened. Her frank confession of his physical attractiveness brought him the startled realization of the peril that lay in such qualities; for years, he had enjoyed his good looks in a manner well-nigh objective. He had appreciated the picturesqueness, the histrionic value of being sleekly handsome; the possession had been utilized diplomatically in the service of his calling.

Of course, he had had friendships with women before—many of them, in fact; the clergyman, however, had been too shrewd to let himself get involved to any extent. He'd liked the feminine adulation and accepted it with dignity; but his perception of his own importance had kept him indulgently aloof. After all, he had considered himself too far above ordinary mortals to pick out anybody for very marked attentions. A man in his position couldn't afford to mingle with women on a footing of apparent equality. Besides, for the past ten years there'd been Mrs. Tompkins; her protective attitude had rather scared the others off from too obvious angling.

But now! With Mrs. Willmott, the old standards seemed to crumble away. He saw his body of a sudden at odds

with his dignified life-work; it was no longer a pawn in the shrewd game, it was on the contrary a stumbling-block in the pathway of his spiritual advancement. It was with a mingled sensation of fear and pompous pride that he perceived his fleshly frame awakening to an energy absolutely independent of his ministerial duties.

He was aghast; he was also tickled beyond measure at this swift unshackling of his animal nature. It meant a struggle and a fierce one; Mitchell could tell himself excitedly that the smell of battle would drive him on to a sweeter moral victory than he'd ever compassed before in his sheltered life.

On several occasions Mrs. Willmott drove the clergyman out into the stinging cold of the country air. At the wheel of her roadster she was a picture of glowing health. A faint color would creep into her cheeks and her eyes would sparkle with a new, almost a frosty brilliance. The ringing clarity of her voice and laugh was all a part of the winter coldness.

Mitchell couldn't get over the idea that this woman at his side was a veritable incarnation of nature itself. She had no share in human reserves and evasions and carefully builded religious dogmas. She possessed the tonic quality of a thing rooted in the soil, nourished by heady breezes, taking its sustenance from the rank moisture of the old pagan earth. That was it—a *pagan* rightness; she thrilled the man like a buffet of rollicking wind in the face. Her invigorating sunniness filtered into the dark, moss-grown crannies of the clergyman's soul and exorcised all the ghostly theological shapes that had inhabited there. She had soon razed many a dark cloistral wall within him and banished the worm-eaten inmates.

Mitchell watched the scattering of his former guardian-spirits without a qualm. He, too, was finding his toes embedded in the good brown earth; he could feel them taking root. He was rapidly becoming a pagan creature of the clean-washed open spaces.

Mrs. Willmott made no concealments. Once, as she smiled into his admiring eyes, she remarked,

"You know, if I thought for a moment that your beliefs were vitally sincere and not just a mixture of habit and etiquette, I'd take the next steamer back to Paris. Do you realize we're not just friends, Mr. Mitchell? Are you aware that we are in the first stages of a shameless flirtation? Because, if you're *not* aware of it, it's high time you learned the truth."

"It's kind of you to warn me," he acknowledged with an exultant laugh.

He was driving today and, as he talked, he sent the motor ahead at quickened speed. He felt like a centaur of old, with his legs galloping under him madly in response to the turbulence of his emotions.

"It's also unnecessary, quite unnecessary," he pursued. "I have learned the truth. But—er—I object strongly to your calling it a flirtation. Perhaps *you* are the one who should be told the real truth."

She shrugged.

"Not at all!" she cried. "I am still studying you, you see. We might as well confess to each other that, where you're concerned, a flirtation is the deepest thing possible. I'm beginning to wonder if anybody *could* do you good."

"Just what do you mean?" he challenged.

"I mean," she returned, "that, no matter what happens to you, you will end right where you are now. But then, nothing much *could* happen to you, after all."

Mitchell tossed his head and scowled at her. They were speeding back to town in the gathering dusk. In his new consciousness of himself as a robust primitive force, he felt an uncontrollable desire to test his power. He and she seemed alone in the frozen world. He had lost all idea of perspective; he suddenly saw himself and the woman as creatures of heroic proportions, looming sky-high above the earth that had been made for them. His

fighting blood was up; it was for him to stage the first great battle for supremacy. With a delighted sense of stopping the whole complicated machinery of the universe, he brought the motor to a standstill. Then he bent over her aggressively and laughed out his jubilation.

He caught the glint of her teeth as she smiled at him. In the frosty stillness his laugh appeared to fill the great vault of heaven with its triumphant clamour. They remained facing each other for a long moment. Mitchell got to the full her startled wonder at his masterful conduct.

"What *under* the sun are you doing?" she asked.

Her voice had its usual crisp brightness, but there was a catch in her breath.

His only reply was to take her roughly in his arms. He was still actor enough to be pleased beyond measure at the grace with which he accomplished the feat. Even at the moment of his spring he had had a swift fear that he might bungle the business; but she had settled quite easily into his embrace and he had found his lips on hers. It didn't occur to him that the success of the occasion might be owing more to his companion's adaptability than to his own skill.

Brimming with pride, he released her at last. The first crucial combat was over, with the man emerging as conqueror. He had quite forgotten his former idea of a resounding moral victory in connection with this woman!

He was just a bit surprised to perceive that she was still smiling her characteristic, friendly and unsubjected smile. While she patted back into place a tumbled curl or two, she nodded her head at him.

"If you feel you've convinced me of my error, you're mistaken," she said decisively. "Nothing could ever budge you an inch. Nobody could either harm you or help you. No matter what you do, you'll keep your self-importance and you'll retain your people's respect. That's what I meant when I said noth-

ing much could happen to you. Even if you should commit crimes, you'd be doomed to a perfectly smug security."

She put a gauntleted hand lightly on his sleeve and laughed up at him. "I'm so sorry—but it's *my* doom to be straightforward—even after a hectic love-scene."

With some rudeness, Mitchell had started up the engine. He didn't want to hear what she was saying. He wanted to drive back to town still exultantly secure in his victory, still conscious of his primitive pagan might. So he ignored her unromantic musings. It was by no means difficult for a man of his type to keep the flattering idea of his easy supremacy uppermost in his mind. Indeed, he went to sleep that night with a sleek smile on his mouth and a boastful curve to his fine eyebrows.

CHAPTER IV

WHENEVER Mrs. Wendell Tompkins gave a dinner, the Reverend Beverley Mitchell sat at her right. Of course, everybody was aware that, if the admirable widow had her way, the clergyman would occupy a permanent place at the foot of the board. It had always been a subject for admiring comment—the minister's refusal to chime in with his hostess in her sentimental scheme. It proved how little position and wealth counted with him; it also showed what a stiff back-bone the man possessed.

Mrs. Tompkins was an aggressive woman—some people didn't hesitate to call her an out-and-out bully—and it was a tremendously difficult matter to stand up against her, once she set her mind on a thing. Her determination was like a deadly steel trap that seldom failed to spring with cruel precision. Mitchell held the unique distinction of having dodged the carefully set mechanism for a whole decade. As a matter of fact, he loved the good things of life; Mrs. Tompkins' wines and motors and ornate houses had for him a tantalizing charm. Her domineering influence in

the Episcopal church, too, impressed him beyond measure. At its root, his opposition to her matrimonial plan was sheer stubborn conceit.

Instinctively he realized that this arrogant, forceful woman would in the end be too much for him. Her personality would overwhelm his. His vanity simply could not brook the alliance. It would be a sacrifice of himself, that was all there was to it. His love for himself surpassed his love for the widow's pomp and glory. Besides, she was sixty—some fifteen years his senior. The clergyman's pride shrank from the thought of so unlovely a disposal of his physical person.

Mrs. Tompkins, however, was a faithful and a dogged soul. She never once swerved from her resolve.

A distinguished company had foregathered at the Tompkins house on the evening following Mitchell's amorous combat with Mrs. Willmott. The dining-room was impressively rich and sombre; the high-backed chairs had a heavy inflexibility that gave to the place more the aspect of a council-chamber than a banquet-hall. The guests might have been a congregation of magistrates summoned by the widow under her hand and seal to consider weighty matters for the common weal.

Mrs. Tompkins herself had the imposing air of the recognized chief in a synod of elders. She sat up majestically straight, her bare spine never once coming in contact with her chair; her friends, as if taking the cue from her, all assumed a poker-like stiffness and kept *their* spines well away from the carved backs of their seats.

Mitchell, surveying the rigid and dogmatic crew, felt a perverse desire to slump and sprawl; but, though he could combat his hostess in a big issue, he found it more difficult to be refractory in minor ways. So he too assumed a dignified erectness.

Mrs. Tompkins tonight had more than ever the pompous attitude of a mother-hen clucking over a favorite chicken. She beamed on the clergyman with her arrogant beady eyes. She

started a topic and then, drawing aside in maternal pride, passed it over to him to develop; it was as if she had scratched up the surface, showed him a succulent worm and told him in all generosity that *he* could have it.

The evening resolved itself, as usual, into one long series of indulgent pats on Mitchell's back. Mrs. Tompkins never let people forget her own share in the business, however. This parading of her protégé only went to prove the woman's glaring conceit. Once or twice Mitchell couldn't help wriggling petulantly; but that was accepted as evidence of his modest diffidence. Nobody put it down to exasperation.

He refused, also, to shine on this occasion. He left many a worm untouched, so to speak; but Mrs. Tompkins retained her expansive good humor.

"You're working much too hard, Beverley," she informed him, with a characteristic omniscient nod. "You've got a splitting headache."

He raised his eyebrows in polite protest.

"On the contrary, I never felt better," he contradicted her.

She ignored this and, motioning to the man behind her chair, ordered in peremptory accents,

"Tell Janet to mix up a dose of my headache remedy."

Mitchell's lips twitched with annoyance.

"But my dear Hester," he pleaded, "please don't bother. There's *nothing* the matter with me, I assure you."

She laid a fat, sympathetic hand on his.

"I know the symptoms. I'm never mistaken, Beverley."

Considering the matter settled, she directed an authoritative glance at the woman on Mitchell's right.

"I am an advocate of old-fashioned remedies, Hilda," she announced. "I don't allow doctors to prescribe for me. I trust my great-grandmother's acumen in these matters. In fact, I got this recipe from an old diary. Arnica,

rhubarb and other honest vegetable ingredients—"

What could the clergyman do? It would have been a breach of etiquette to refuse the noxious mess. Besides, if he *had* refused, Mrs. Tompkins would probably have employed force. He therefore gulped down the liquid when it arrived.

"There, then!" his hostess encouraged him with a hard smile. "Now you'll feel better, Beverley. I don't believe in a person's wearing himself out. Take dear Bishop Hawkins for an example; there is a man who has killed himself for his diocese. The moment I heard of his illness this morning, I went to the hospital."

She paused; but it was obvious she hadn't finished. Her short silence prepared her hearers for a dramatic conclusion.

"I was *refused* admittance to his room," Mrs. Tompkins wound up with a flourish.

Her guests understood the implication of her words: if *she* had been barred from entering a sick-room, the end must be appallingly near.

A hush followed Mrs. Tompkins' ominous statement. Then a woman near the foot of the table murmured,

"Dear old Bishop Hawkins! An irreparable loss to the Episcopal Church!"

"A *terrible* loss," came the hostess' reply. From the tone of her voice, one sensed a sharp correction: terrible—yes—but *not* irreparable.

A venerable man spoke up:

"The fine old line will be extinct, with Evartson Hawkins gone. The present generation is a race of upstarts and climbers. The church will let down its gates; like everything else, it will forget its traditions. It will go the way of Annapolis and West Point. When I was a boy, only the *finest* of us were thought fit for the naval and military academies. But now what do you find? The sons of *cooks*, God save the mark!"

Mrs. Tompkins alone seemed unperturbed by this bitter prophecy of doom.

"The church hasn't yet let down its

gates," she exclaimed. "And it *won't*, Townsend."

Her tone sounded like a war-cry for the assembling of the band of the militantly faithful.

The old man continued to mumble, however, as if with a grim joy that all was lost!

"The church needs a gentleman—a true gentleman—for this office. There's certainly something nobler about a man, born an aristocrat, who labors for the poor than about a man of humble birth who, when he strives for the betterment of the lowly, is merely striving for the betterment of his own class."

After this exhausting, Ciceronian period, he drew breath slowly and glared about him.

"Where are you going to find a *true* gentleman of today?" he challenged the company.

At that moment his fiery eyes met Mitchell's. The Reverend Beverley had become conscious, during the old chap's harangue, that all the other guests had ventured appealing looks at Mrs. Tompkins in a mute supplication for guidance. The widow, majestic and unperturbed, received the direct scrutiny and, by the subtlest art, deflected it in the clergyman's direction; it was positively as if the concerted gaze, hitting against her hard eye-balls, had glanced off and, striking the table, rebounded in Mitchell's face. He had found himself the focal point of interest. Old Townsend Redmond, confronting the company, had been irresistibly drawn into the prevailing current. He examined Mitchell with a close absorption and of a sudden his air of unanswerable defiance faded out. He gave the younger man a smile of gentle gratitude. If at this juncture the whole dinner-company had dropped on their knees at the Reverend Beverley's feet, their abasement before him couldn't have been pointed more eloquently. The silent acclamation, dramatic and intense, moved the clergyman forthwith to a warm response. With difficulty he repressed a tremor of his whole frame.

Then he noted beside him the pom-

pous swelling of Mrs. Tompkins' capacious chest. The very jewels on her bosom appeared to twinkle with self-satisfaction, to wink at him arrogantly as if to say, "*See* what you owe to this magnificent woman!"

The spell was broken. He saw his advancement in the churchly hierarchy as but another setting of the widow's relentless trap; he understood in a flash the falsity of his position. Why under the heavens should *he* be shackled by outworn dogmas and immured in a medieval theological dungeon? He seemed to hear Mrs. Willmott's clear voice and ringing laugh. "What's the use of living, unless one is free and a *confessed* rebel? There's no real happiness outside the merry greenwood of outlawry." Her words swept through him like a gust of outdoor air. He longed to jump up and shout out his glorious revolt. A fig for a bishopric!

But of course the Reverend Beverley was far too polite for such an outburst. Besides, the time was not yet ripe, warned something suavely, diplomatically cautious within him—best not throw all discretion to the winds just yet! So he remained erect in his chair and received with a conscious show of humility the mute adoration of the company.

Betraying themselves as they had with such unusual abandon, the guests at length became embarrassed. The silence that had been of a mystical ecstasy grew into a mere awkward pause.

But nothing could make Mrs. Tompkins shy. She was the first to speak.

"By the way, Beverley," she announced, "I have been talking to the Grolier Club people about publishing some of your sermons in *de luxe* form. They are *most* enthusiastic over the project—"

CHAPTER V

SOME ten days later, the Reverend Beverley Mitchell stood before his shaving-mirror and, wielding the brush with a dash and verve seldom associ-

ated with such matutinal exercises, exulted at his image in the glass. Nobody could deny at present that he was in the midst of the merry greenwood. He stood confessed—the frankest and freest of rebels. Throwing up his lathered chin, he brought his razor into play and took the keenest masculine pleasure from the scrape of his stubborn beard. A twelve-hours' scraggy growth *can* on occasion impress one with its suggestion of the primitive and the unregenerate. Mitchell looked at his eyes reflected in the glass and indulged in a sleek smile at their youthful brightness. For the past month, he had been undergoing a spell of rejuvenation; today he was a rollicking boy again.

"Ah—if *only* you were free!" he had murmured to Edith Willmott. When had he murmured it? Could it have been just yesterday afternoon?

"Well—and what then?" she had asked with her wonderful candid smile. "What if I were free?"

He had taken her hands in a mood of reckless, jubilant mastery.

"What *then*?" he'd protested. "Can't you guess? Can't you realize the joy I'd get from making you my own in spite of the whole world?"

"But the hideous mockery of modern divorce—with the resultant marriage, etc., etc., *etc.*!" she had caught him up.

"Oh—hang all that," had come his joyous repudiation of his past beliefs.

"I wonder—I honestly wonder," she had returned in her clear, direct tones.

"You certainly can't say," he had challenged her, "that nothing much has happened to me, these last few days."

"A good deal *seems* to have happened, I admit," she said.

"Seems!" he scoffed. "*Seems!*"

"You are playing safe; you are covering up your footsteps," she had told him good-humoredly. "You're not the type to be found out, you know."

"What precautions have I taken, may I ask?" He was sharp.

She laughed. "Because you've taken a few less than usual, you think you've

taken none. But you've taken enough to be quite secure, I assure you. To a really impulsive man, your methods would be amazing—Don't claim, before *me*, to be indiscreet. I know better."

"But suppose you got your freedom?" he had pressed.

"I wonder—I still wonder," she parried. "By the way, do you know you've been careful not to mention the word *divorce*? That, my dear Beverley, is proof you haven't been altogether cured of dodging."

At this point in his reflections, Mitchell laid down the razor and ran the tips of his fingers with satisfaction over his glossily smooth chin. Then, tempering the water in the basin to just the proper warmth, he proceeded to bathe his flushed face, with gentle patting motions of his hands. His ablutions were always drawn out to an excessive length; they were in the nature of pleasurable, unhurried rites. He liked to linger over this polishing and freshening up of his good-looking person.

Cupping his hands under the cold-water faucet, he dashed the icy drops over his face. He indulged in an enthusiastic shiver and immediately his thoughts had reverted to Edith Willmott. With a humorous half-smile, he was reflecting that she had much in common with cold-water taps! A bracing shock that rather set one gasping, followed by a healthy tingling glow—that was the effect one got from the impact of her utterly unsentimental personality. As open as the day, as sane as sunshine! Nothing that happened to a man, in relation to her, could result in carking remorse. Edith lived in a particular atmosphere, in which neither she nor her companions in out-lawry cast a shadow.

Mitchell, while he concentrated with a finicky precision on the part in his black hair, was at the same time musing over the rare, cool purity of every detail in Mrs. Willmott's boudoir, with the windows all open and the fitful gusts of afternoon breeze creating an outdoor cleanness.

The clergyman, examining the beautifully even part in the middle of his skull, nodded a silent approval, put down the comb and went to work with his brushes.

Of a sudden, he paused, watched his reflection for an intense moment and exclaimed half-aloud, "Good heavens, she's my—my—"

But he couldn't, in his morning solitude, summon to his lips the word he compassed with such ease in the pulpit. He shook his head vehemently. "No—she's *not* that. She's my nymph in the brake."

It was true. Edith Willmott could not be adequately placed, except in mythological terms. The language of Christian peoples could not describe her subtle charm.

He remembered having said to her:

"Edith, you don't understand me. Perhaps I do seem just a trifle—er—cautious. Isn't the explanation simple enough, in all conscience? Could I ever forgive myself if people, guessing the truth, began to speak slurringly of you?"

"Ah—they began that years and years ago," she had informed him. "And with *perfect* justice, too, Beverley. Please don't let such ideas trouble you. I'm way beyond the pale, you know; I'm an out-and-out pariah. Why make excuses for being cautious? I understand."

This alone rankled, somehow, in his thoughts—the realization that she discounted the absoluteness of his revolt from his own past. It was the one fleck in the vivid sunshine of their relation. It seemed almost like a definite accusation of hypocrisy. Mitchell hadn't minded being rallied for an apparent insincerity in other matters; but in this case it was so patently *unjust*.

As for convincing her of her error—it was quite out of the question. Since she probably had no desire to divorce her husband, she wouldn't be likely to put Mitchell to the supreme test. How otherwise could he prove his devotion than by marrying her after she had obtained her freedom?

His caution at present was the result of motives much too subtle to be explained. It was all very well for her to call herself a pariah and an exile from respectable society. It was, nevertheless, his duty to safeguard her reputation with every ounce of his chivalry. Suppose he ignored appearances and threw his lot in recklessly with hers today! Then—the thing *was* possible—suppose she did divorce her husband. Mitchell winced at the thought of the world's brutality toward Edith, should he marry her afterward. If the world, however, believed that their acquaintance hadn't ripened to friendship and affection till the divorce was a matter of history, Edith would be treated—perhaps not with cordiality—but at least with charity.

Mitchell again bent over his mirror and smoothed each tiny wayward hair of his eyebrows back into place. His expression had changed now to one of positive grimness. How could he ever expect his motives to be understood? They were of a close-woven complexity that *no* woman could appreciate. If he'd had only himself to consider, a swift and joyous rebellion would have been his privilege. But as it was—

Two days before, he had received a pretty salutation from Mrs. Fane, who, in her limousine, had glided by Mitchell's own motor just as he was drawing up to the curb beside Edith Willmott's apartment-house. At once, the clergyman had put on speed and made the circuit of the block.

He had mentioned the incident to Edith.

"It may strike you as far-fetched strategy on my part," he had said. "But Mrs. Fane has a bitter tongue. I don't want *her* to begin an investigation of your activities, Edith."

"It does strike me as far-fetched," she had replied. "Aren't you aware that Mrs. Fane would have been touched? She would have told everybody about your efforts to redeem me. You would have gained by it, Beverley."

"And you?" he had wanted sternly to know.

"Oh I!" She gave him an eloquent head-shake. "You know I don't count. You aren't hoodwinking me the least bit. If you'd only realize that you're secure, no matter what you do, you'd save yourself so *much* worry."

Mitchell turned away from the glass in a mood of dejection. Then all at once he recalled her parting words of yesterday.

"How awfully handsome you are, Beverley, when all's said and done," she had cried. "Since I'm honest with you in other ways, I might as well praise you where it's possible. You'd have made a fortune on the stage."

He swung around once more to the mirror and his gloom lifted on the instant.

The buzz of the telephone in the bedroom interrupted his rapt contemplation.

"Yes? This is Mr. Mitchell."

His voice, for all its carefully guarded professional note, had a ring to it that evidenced his guess as to the person on the other end of the wire.

"Beverley? I have just heard that poor Bishop Hawkins has had another stroke. This is the third. Of course, the last vestige of hope is gone now." Mrs. Tompkins never deigned, in a telephone communication, to mention who she was.

"Ah—I am *deeply* grieved, Hester," Mitchell responded neatly. But his mind, at this moment, was not on bishops or even bishoprics. Sitting on his bed, he was crouching at an angle that enabled him to see his reflection in the mirror set into his bathroom door.

CHAPTER VI

FOR two more vivid and exultant weeks, the Reverend Beverley Mitchell visited the boudoir of his nymph. The abundantly healthy animalism of the whole business continued; the clergyman's mind seemed a chamber of wide-open casements swept through by the keenest of breezes. Anything resem-

bling a worm-eaten, dogmatic "Thou shalt not" had been taken down and packed away out of sight. It was as if a stuffy little room, full of horse-hair furniture, with cross-stitch mottoes on the wall, had been turned over to a very modern decorator and transformed beyond recognition. To be sure, the discarded relics of the past hadn't been thrown into a public ash-can; but Mitchell could tell himself that bit of discretion was prompted only by his desire to protect Edith Willmott.

Late one afternoon—it was always of an afternoon that Mitchell and Edith met—they sat in her drawing-room and sipped tea. Edith had a skilful and quite unobtrusive way of eliminating domestics from the background. Her maid was given indiscriminate half-holidays; for the rest, she relied on the convenient "service department" of the apartment-house. She always brewed the tea unaided.

"I do all this for you, Beverley," she had informed him once. "I've often noticed that men have a much greater sense of decency than women. George used to try to teach me a bit about privacy; but I was brought up in public, so to speak. Mother taught me a cunning little French paryer when I was a child; but that was as far as her moral instruction went. She never drilled me in the necessity of keeping doors shut and *not* undressing before the entire household."

Today, Edith drank her tea in silence.

At length, setting down her cup and saucer with a decisive rattle, she announced:

"I have engaged passage for Thursday week, Beverley. America isn't my proper milieu; I'm going back to Paris for good."

Mitchell, in his astonishment, dropped his cup into its saucer with a crash.

"You're not serious!" he cried. "You *can't* be serious, Edith."

She tossed her tiny napkin on the table beside her, brushed a crumb or two off her short skirt, then gave him

a frank, level glance and nodded her head brusquely at him.

"Oh—but I am *quite* serious," she said. "You remember, I told you my husband and I separated rather than stagnate together?"

"Yes, I remember." His voice had an aggrieved note. "But surely, with us, Edith, there'd be no danger of that."

There was something naïf, almost touching, in this involuntary admission, by the man, of his belief in his own infinite variety. Mrs. Willmott got to the full the implication of his words.

"You see, when I once read the last page of a book, I never turn back to the beginning and start right over again," she elucidated. "That is," she qualified it good-naturedly, "unless there's *more* in the thing than meets the eye. I like you, Beverley; I like you very much, as I've already told you. But I'm afraid I have learned you by heart at one sitting."

He drew himself up with hauteur.

"If that's the case—if you *think* that's the case—I suppose I must surrender," he remarked, a faintly acrid bite in his words. "Pardon me, my dear Edith, if I say you strike me as just a trifle—er—cock-sure, in your estimate of others."

She shook her head quickly.

"No, not cock-sure in the least," she corrected him. "I am a very earnest student of others, Beverley."

He shrugged. "Maybe you are; I don't consider you thorough, however—that I must confess."

All at once, Mitchell blew the breath out of his nostrils with a challenging snort and, springing to his feet, strode over to a window. The calm sagacity of her direct glance had exasperated him. With his back to her, he threw up his shoulders in a gesture of defiance and burst into a loud, insolent laugh that did much to restore his sense of mastery.

"Of course, the thing's preposterous," he cried. "I have no thought of surrender. You'll find it's not so easy as all that to get rid of me." He

glared fixedly at the house across the street. "When I make up my mind to keep a thing, Edith, I usually have my way."

"It's not a question of a vulgar jilting," she returned in equably patient tones. "It has been a jolly little interlude and the curtain's coming down."

"Nonsense!" he caught her up. "You've had the idea that I existed only for your pleasure. When you got through with me, all you had to do was to stop pulling the strings and I'd collapse like a rag-doll. As a matter of fact, I'm standing on my own feet at this minute; moreover, I intend to fight."

His melodramatic words had a superb sound in the clergyman's ears. He swung around and gloweringly confronted the woman.

"You'll cancel that booking," he told her. "I don't mean to give you up—there's the straight truth of it."

Today for the first time, he had felt himself checked violently in his striding pagan progress. From the start, he had ignored the element of mutability in connection with Edith Willmott; he and she would go sweeping on together eternally. Since he was full of a joyous, singing content, how could *she* be otherwise?

To the Reverend Beverley, the thought of a veer in Edith's attitude or an abrupt drop in the temperature of her ecstasy was inconceivable, granted his own changelessness, his own utter absorption in his passion. Her abrupt announcement this afternoon had come as a jolting shock; it was as if an air-ship in swiftest flight had all at once felt the drag of an anchor pinioning it to the earth. The clergyman had been too stunned for some moments to understand.

Then, after his quick rush of anger, he had found that his mind had recovered something of its ingenuity. He stood there silently before her and gave heed to the busy functioning of his thoughts. His vanity was much too buoyant to remain long prostrate; it was quite impossible to take, at its sur-

face value an apparent slight. He was *not* the sort a woman could dismiss lightly. So, in Edith Willmott's case, this sudden perversity must be prompted by deep and subtle motives, which, if considered, would without doubt enable him to lay a very flattering unction to his soul.

Swiftly, as he reflected on the matter, the soothing explanation struck him.

Tired of him? He could shrug the possibility away now with a laugh—an exultant, triumphant laugh this time. Edith had been studying him; and at last she had reached the conclusion that a complete severance of their relation was indispensable for his welfare.

"Don't be stupid, Beverley." She was speaking again, her voice apparently serene and casual. "Your work has been interrupted *quite* long enough." She gave him her frank smile. "It's high time you got back into the pulpit and stayed there."

He took three impulsive strides and stood over her, his eyes bright and warm and tender.

"So you've heard—about Bishop Hawkins' illness?" His voice was gentle.

Her eyes sparkled.

"Indeed I have!" she cried. "The papers are hinting—broadly—as to his successor."

The Reverend Beverley saw it all now. With an incredible, mistaken generosity, she was giving him up to his glorious future. She was running away, lest her presence should be a hindrance and a hurt. In a blinding flash, his mind focused on all her gay raillery of the past; the light of his understanding picked out every word of those humorous aspersions. She had been afraid to tell him the whole truth of her affection; she had, by a simulation of laughing indifference, kept open a door of retreat through which she could dart at the moment when his future should depend upon her departure from the scene. Ah—but he was too clever for her, after all; he had her trapped.

"Edith!" he cried and, taking her by the shoulders, shook her lightly. "Edith! Most unselfish of women, I understand you at last. Don't leave me—don't go away from me. It's *you* I need, my darling."

Only half-conscious of his romantic abandon, he dropped to his knees beside her chair and took her hands in a tense grasp that reinforced his anguished plea.

"You are my life, my work, my—my *God*!"

The blasphemy of that almost unnerved him for the moment, but he repeated the words and got from the passionate reiteration of them a rebellious thrill.

"You and I, Edith, you and I! Let perdition take all else!"

"My dear Beverley!" Edith's incisive words cut into his blurred consciousness. "You are acting like a sentimental fool. You're being too absurd for words."

With some impatience she pushed him away from her and got to her feet.

"Come—be sensible, Beverley. You're not impressive on your knees, I assure you."

Mitchell, crouching by the empty chair, could still combat her in her mood of perverse coolness.

"A fool, Edith? Perhaps I am. But think of the glory of some folly, think of the glory of *our* folly. Ah—why aren't you free, why can't I take you and show the whole world my prize?"

By now he had forgotten everything but the overpowering drama of the conflict. His histrionism was in its fullest flower. In a theatrical crisis of this sort, Mitchell's mere bodily motions were ever of a compelling charm; like all really fine actors, he could rely on his arms and legs to take care of themselves felicitously at moments of spiritual stress. He leaped to his feet with impulsive grace and, seizing her hands again, cried,

"Oh, let's be done with *sacrifice*, Edith! Let's be content with each other—"

"Sacrifice?" She showed herself at a loss. "What are you driving at, Beverly?"

"You refuse—even now—to admit the truth?" His voice had a fierce repression. "You're obdurate? Why, when you know I see all and understand all, do you still hold back?"

"If your queer vanity insists on that solution, have it your own way," she returned, with a laugh that had an edge of annoyance. "Call it a sacrifice by all means. Of course, I don't intend to cancel my passage. Shall we agree that I'm too unselfish for words and just drop it there?"

Mitchell could only shake his head and breathe out a despairing sigh. The hopelessness of the struggle had struck him at last. No argument under heaven, he mused sadly, can exert the slightest influence over a woman who has determined on a Quixotic self-abnegation for the sake of the man she loves. How make her see the positive lunacy of her altruism? Feeling herself under a direct inspiration, she deafens herself to all pleading. Under the spell of her fixed idea, she is frozen to an adamant resistance. There is no way to move her even an inch.

Mitchell, therefore, sighed out his helpless resignation. An anguished pity for himself and for this tragically mistaken woman welled up in his heart; invisible fingers seemed to have gripped at his throat. In his unhappiness, however, there was a modicum of comfort, a faint alleviating boon; for he was somehow aware that this moment of subtly conscious renunciation, on his part, was giving the close of their drama a note of fine repression, a touch of pure exaltation. No falsely glittering pyrotechnics here! Mitchell could almost hear the fall of a curtain, followed by a gasping intake of breath from an unseen multitude. His exquisite play-acting had reached a triumphant climax.

He had released her hands now and was surveying her with a gentle sorrow.

"Very well, Edith," he murmured.

"We'll have it as you wish. I shan't raise any more objections to your going. But an ocean between us will have no effect; I shall continue to wait and hope. The day will come when you will be free."

She laughed gaily.

"That's quite possible," she said. "Indeed, should circumstances ever warrant it, I'd divorce George in a minute."

"You will find, I think," Mitchell told her with a beautiful dignity—through which there sounded a subdued note of self-appreciation—"that before very long circumstances *will* warrant it."

It was proof of his delicacy in handling the situation that he should have used those guarded words; a more obtuse man would simply have blurted out, "Oh, you'll find soon enough that you can't *live* without me."

CHAPTER VII

MRS. WILLMOTT'S short note from Paris reached the Reverend Beverly Mitchell at an extremely critical moment. She had written a witty sentence or two about the stormy passage, a few random comments on her adored Paris. Then she had wound up, "I am taking steps to divorce my husband; I have found that circumstances already warrant it."

For a week now, Mitchell had been giving her, with decided fairness, the benefit of the doubt. Even after reading her letter, he could still find a deep pity for her in his heart.

"Poor Edith!" he whispered. "She has struggled. I know that she has struggled."

Well—so had he; but the strong fibres of his will, strengthened by long years of right living and right thinking, had not been warped beyond repair in a few weeks. He had been able to get them back in short order to their former flexibility. With Edith it was of course different—appallingly different. She had long ago lost the power of any recuperation. She had tried—perhaps desperately; but she had failed.

After Mrs. Willmott's departure from the New York scene, there had come an abrupt drop in Mitchell's buoyancy. He had awakened all at once to sordid facts; his specious, soaring exhilaration had died down and he had discovered himself as a miserable creature with a rackingly sore conscience. For weeks, he had been winging a bold flight in the rarified upper air; then suddenly, without any warning, the ether had ceased to sustain him. He had gone crashing to earth and had found himself sprawling on all fours in the dust of his own parish.

At first, he had felt within himself a bitter regret. He had wanted to get back to the intoxicating air he had lately been breathing; his lungs seemed stiflingly congested. He strove with a valiant frenzy against a mere humdrum acclimatization; he determined to go on rebelling to the last gasp. By an unfortunate mischance, however, his stout conscience had required only this return to the old mode of living to resume its functioning; like a watch that had stopped from too great atmospheric pressure, it soon began to tick out its inexorable message in its normal surroundings.

Mitchell at length couldn't help hearing and heeding; gradually but inevitably, he had been forced into viewing Edith Willmott's spell according to time-honored conventions. The ghostly presences she had exorcised crept back one by one into the clergyman's brain; the last gleam of pagan sunshine flickered out and the old medieval darkness resumed its sway.

Ten days after Edith sailed, Mitchell's mind was the same haunted demesne it had been before ever she appeared. At present, however, it was his cruel task to justify himself in some way to these guiding spirits whose trust he had violated. So, before he quite realized what he was doing, he was struggling to make his acclimatization complete; he was working hard to win back the former smug security of his lot.

Of course, to a man as well versed

as Mitchell in biblical and churchly lore, there were many guiding precedents. He had only to resort, in his mental probings, to crucial instances of Old Testament warriors and early Christian ascetics. Merely calling the roll of the fallen champions of the faith in the dim past brought some comfort. What a magnificent band, after all! In a way, it was an honor to be one of that princely company. In how many cases had remorse steeled these men to a last invincible righteousness!

To Mitchell, his ordeal and surrender had early assumed the dignity of a terrible—but at the same time an incomparable—lesson. Had Saint Anthony himself succumbed once during his celebrated temptations, he might have gained a greater profit than by his superhuman resistance. An agony of repentance could temper the soul more effectively than an arrogant triumph of righteousness. Mitchell therefore left nothing to be desired, so far as prostrate remorse went. He was playing this great scene of his life-drama before an audience composed of angels and demons, as it were; in this Miltonic amphitheatre, he was being put to the supreme test. Before very long, the clergyman had realized that, in his abasement, he had won the celestial hosts over to his side. He had made his peace, too, with the habitants of his own brain. He was safe at last!

Even before he had received Edith Willmott's letter, Mitchell had sadly, and with a reluctance that was half-tender, given her up. It was indeed strange how these women, the moment their apparently baleful mission was accomplished, faded from view; they existed only to cast seeds of repentance into a man's soul—then they ceased to count.

Mitchell could still think of Edith with pity. She had loved him; she had striven, in her own way, to save him. At first, with her note in his hand, he could shake his fine head sympathetically and reflect on the pathos of her weak surrender. Where he had fought and won, she had fought and failed.

She was beckoning him to her across the ocean. She was pleading with him now to take her.

Suddenly, Mitchell jumped to his feet and began a nervous pacing of his study. His smile of melancholy solicitude had all at once died away. His lips twitched spasmodically; his eyes had grown round and startled.

Striding up and down, he thumped his left fist with a monotonous regularity into the open palm of his right hand. A nerve-shattering fear had leaped swiftly into his brain. In a moment, he had collapsed from indulgent tranquillity into downright panic-terror. He had remembered, with a shiver of foreboding, that sometimes these women *didn't* disappear gracefully at a given signal. Oh, there had been many, many cases where they had done unspeakable things, ruining the lives of the men whom they'd enchanted, exposing to a blaring notoriety secrets that should have been sacred. A woman who wasn't virtuous could *never* be counted on; she was inevitably irresponsible, malicious, destructive. Fool that he'd been, to trust Edith's candid smile. Cast off by him now, she might turn ugly. He had played into her subtle hands; he might be at her mercy at this moment.

Mitchell, with trembling fingers, got out his handkerchief and dabbed at his forehead. He felt clammy cold all over and at the same time flushes of heat tingled through him. His head was in a fevered turmoil. What *could* he have been thinking of, to forget his safety, to jeopardize his future for this capricious woman? He'd been mad; he'd been acting under a fatal enchantment. And now—just when he'd believed himself secure—this threatening letter! That it *was* a threat there could be no possible doubt. She was holding him up, positively blackmailing him.

He threw himself heavily into a chair and pressed his knuckles hard against his skull. He was panting now, as if after an actual race from a pursuer. As he sat there, dizzy and confused, he continued to beat his hands together;

the rhythmic regularity of the sound at last penetrated to his brain and steadied it.

Shutting his eyes tight, he pondered, with a dogged determination to find his way out of this unspeakable labyrinth. Little by little, his terror subsided. After all, Edith *did* love him; spurred on by her passion, she might struggle fiercely—even to the point of striking a death-blow at his reputation—in order to make him hers. But—and here his ruffled brow smoothed itself out—should Edith find it *legally* impossible to make him hers, she would put forth no further claim upon him. Her love was too deep to be quite base. She would hurt him only in the hope of binding his wounds and nursing him back to health herself. Once she knew he was lost to her irrevocably, her generosity, prompted by her love, would assert itself.

Mitchell, still shaky from his arduous mental conflict, sprang to his feet and hurried from the room. A moment later, he was running down the front steps of the rectory; he had got on his coat and hat without so much as a glance into a mirror.

Mrs. Tompkins, seated at a ponderous desk in her library, received him with a bluff cordiality. She had just returned from a walk in the park; her weather-beaten, florid face might have belonged to a sea-captain rather than to a dowager of unimpeachable aristocracy. She was wearing stout boots and a sport-suit of mannish cut. Surveying the clergyman shrewdly over her gold-rimmed spectacles, she nodded her head at him, took in his flustered state with her usual air of arrogant wisdom and waved him indulgently to a chair.

"Take that one—over by the window," she ordered, pointing it out in most business-like fashion.

Mrs. Tompkins never allowed a guest a choice in such matters; in her house, people sat where they were told to sit.

"Please be quiet, Beverley, for a few moments," she pursued. "I must finish this letter."

She turned her broad back upon him forthwith and went to work on her missive. After she had completed a sentence, she would read it out in a rumbling undertone.

"How do you spell *ecclesiastical*?" she asked him once.

When he supplied the information, she remarked,

"Yes, that's correct," quite as if he had given the right answer in a spelling lesson.

Signing her name at last with a masterful flourish, she wiped her pen carefully, took off her spectacles and, putting them into a gold case, snapped the cover shut. Then, with a single abrupt movement, she had whisked herself and her chair around and was facing the clergyman.

"Now then—what's the matter?" she asked in preceptorial tones.

She fixed him again with her hard glance. There was a steely glint in her eyes today. Clever old schemer that she was, she had read the man's desperate purpose the moment he'd appeared on the threshold. His flustered face had been an eloquent witness of capitulation. During all the years she had studied him, she had known just how he would look when the inevitable day of surrender arrived.

To the widow's sharp query, Mitchell at first made no response. He sat crouched in one corner of his chair and, his arms limply folded, returned her arrogant gaze with a dogged, hopeless defiance. The old ineffaceable vanity and antagonism showed in his wide-open eyes; but the lower part of his face seemed to have undergone a wilting process. His jaw appeared positively unhinged. He was sacrificing himself—of that he was still aware; and he was struggling to force home to Mrs. Tompkins a realization of her immeasurable good-fortune. Henceforth she would be in his debt eternally—that was what he had hoped to convey in his silent scrutiny.

By an unfortunate mischance, however, Mitchell was unable to strike the desired note. The situation had some-

how got beyond his control. The pompous widow was as usual confident that she held the reins of power. She, the superior creature, had won the victory. She had filched the scene from the clergyman and made of herself the boastful protagonist. He, the Reverend Beverley Mitchell, was already reduced to a subordinate position. Wearily, he unfolded his arms and let his hands drop between his knees. The trap had sprung on him. His vision plunged into the future and he saw himself, crippled and chained, being led through the years like a performing bear with a ring in its nose.

Even while he was thus miserably pondering, he had blurted out the amorous reason of his visit. Mrs. Tompkins had drawn the words out of his mouth at the very instant when he had perceived his doom most clearly.

Still sitting upright in her chair, she nodded her head at him brusquely three times.

"Very well, Beverley," she announced with incisive distinctness. "I am ready to marry you. You're at that stage of life where you need a controlling influence. At forty-five, a man is apt to make a fool of himself over some pretty young woman."

Her eyes snapped at him. "It's very fortunate for you, Beverley, that I'm not sensitive. As I said, I am quite ready."

Mitchell, with a startled exclamation, had half-risen from his chair. The widow peremptorily waved him back.

"Don't get up!" she commanded. "It's not necessary. I don't expect—indeed I shouldn't *welcome* anything like a demonstration of affection. After all, this is a business arrangement, not a sentimental one, Beverley. We happen to be an ambitious pair. You can be of service to me; I can aid you. That's the long and short of it."

CHAPTER VIII

It was nothing short of tragic that, on the very morning when the Rever-

end Beverley Mitchell was to be elevated to the episcopate, a letter from Edith Willmott should have arrived in the post. The clergyman had never answered her first note from Paris; he had deemed it wiser to leave to the newspapers the conveying of all information. During the past six months, the European journals had devoted considerable space to his affairs: his engagement and marriage and his election as Bishop Hawkins' successor. By his unbroken silence, he had pointedly—but at the same time mercifully—informed Mrs. Willmott that a certain chapter of his life was ended. For some weeks, he had experienced moments of intense uncertainty; since no word came from Paris, however, he had recovered his tranquillity. He had judged Edith aright; her love had been big enough to teach her a generous submission.

He had breakfasted early this morning and, retiring to his sumptuous and sombrely forbidding study (his wife had fitted up the chamber without once deigning to consult him), he had looked over the notes for his opening address before the diocesan convention. In a moment of solemn reverie, he had absent-mindedly picked up his pile of mail and glanced over it. Of a sudden, he had found himself staring at the French stamp on one envelope; then his eyes rested on the neat, admirably legible writing.

With hands that trembled uncontrollably, he ripped open the envelope and snatched out the letter. All at once, he had gone hot and heavy and faint; his panic had returned in a turbulent rush. He read the thing over with tempestuous haste and gleaned nothing from it; it was only when he had turned back to the first line that his brain began to function.

"My dear Beverley," he read, this time slowly and laboriously, "I wasn't honest with you in my last letter. I apologize humbly. It was the first time I deceived you, after all. I couldn't help wondering just how you'd react to the prospect of my freedom; I wanted

to make sure that I'd read you correctly. Your discreet silence has proved to me my cleverness and insight. As a matter of fact, I met a charming chap on the steamer; before I'd even reached Paris, we had come to an understanding. I have my divorce from George. I am to be married in ten days. As for you, Beverley—you appealed to my philanthropic instincts and there was an end to it. I saw quite clearly I couldn't hurt you or help you; so there was no earthly reason why we shouldn't have had our brief fling, was there? In the very beginning, I had a few unselfish hopes—but not after the first week.

"I salute you in your new magnificence, Beverley. You will be handsome and imposing; your robes will become you. How proud and content you must feel! In future, you will never lack the pomp your exquisitely emotional nature craves. Your life will be just one gorgeous Arthurian pageant, with the dignitaries of the church bobbing about at your feet. Think of it, Beverley! Instead of ragged little boys for adorers, you will have a 'Round Table' of the well-born and the influential. The tiniest frog in the puddle you preside over will be rector of some smart parish. You are about to tread a path of celestial primroses and fabulous asphodels. You won't even be allowed to *die* simply and unostentatiously; but of course you wouldn't want a solitary death-bed scene. While I languish alone on my 'grabat,' you will expire in state. You'll make a splendid, theatrical get-away, with tall candles burning and incense smoking. There'll be Latin chants and a score of men kneeling in gorgeous vestments. You'll wave your hands with a magisterial gesture of blessing; then you'll arrange the folds of your gown—surely as a bishop you won't wear plain pajamas!—and your soul will embark on the perfumed air. I hope that will be the procedure; it would be *too* humiliating for everybody concerned if, at this public apotheosis, you got plain stage-fright and spoiled the show. Don't let the thought of the hereafter

terrify you, I beg. You're not a *brave* man, Beverley. Don't, at the last, let your sense of incurable importance desert you. Should you once find yourself without that, you'd be but a cowardly figure. So *please* remember to keep fast hold of your vanity during your last moments in this vale of tears!"

With a stifled cry of exasperation, Mitchell threw the letter to the floor. Then planting his elbows on the desk, he took his hot head in his hands and stared straight before him with an unseeing absorption at the Bellini "Holy Family" on the wall.

In his heart was a bitter, implacable wrath against Edith Willmott. The blow she had struck was so brutally unfair; by a few gay words she had reduced his imminent magnificence to a pasteboard puppet show. He had been caught unawares, a vicious pin probe had deflated his swelling pride; he felt within himself no longer the buoyant urge of his vanity. He was looking out furiously now on a world of mere tawdry sham. His position! His future! His robes!

An hour later the door burst open with an explosive report. Mitchell was still sitting at his desk, his head propped up on his hands.

"Good heavens, Beverley!" His wife in a glittering panoply of black sequins strode across the room and shook him violently by the shoulder. "What are you thinking of? Have you gone stark mad? The motor will be here in exactly twenty minutes."

She jerked the discouraged clergyman to his feet, led him to his dressing-room and pushed him through the door. "Parsons!" she ordered aggressively. "Parsons! Come here at once and help me to dress Mr. Mitchell."

CHAPTER IX

THE cathedral seemed to vibrate and quake with the rolling thunder of the organ; the jubilant strains of "Diademata" swelled through the edifice, filled it with so tumultuous a tonal sea that

the walls appeared in danger of splitting open from the overpowering assault of the sound waves. Suddenly, in the distant doorway, a figure in a white cassock shaped itself out of the gloom, as if conjured up magically by the music; it was the crucifer, who, carrying the gleaming symbol of Christianity, was heading the triumphal procession. For an instant he remained motionless; then, with a buoyant, springy step, he advanced into the aisle. A slender youth followed, bearing aloft the banner of the church, with its white cross and shield on a silken purple field. Trumpets sounded a thrilling, militant blare and the male choir, two by two, came on, their heads thrown back, their voices pouring from their throats. "Crown Him with many crowns," they sang, the sopranos soaring to silvery heights above the rich under-roar of the baritones and basses.

It was not, however, till the black-robed vergers had passed with a solemn tread that the full grandeur of the pageant was disclosed to the congregation. The main body of the procession threw into eclipse the picturesque vanguard; it was like the sudden flaming up of the sun into a sky washed with ephemeral tints by Aurora. The clergy of the Protestant churches and of the Russian Orthodox church swept down the aisle; over each man's white surplice was thrown his gorgeous doctor's hood. All the pomp and splendor and glory of the Renaissance seemed to have risen out of the past as the company strode forward to the grandiose music of the organ. Twelve bishops, pacing slowly, brought up the rear of the company. In their robes, color reached its effulgent climax; the effect was of well-nigh insufferable magnificence. The eyes of the spectators watered from too intense strain; the dignitaries ran together into a kaleidoscopic blur of scarlet and purple and gold and blue.

Last of all, with a faltering step and a face of ashy pallor, came the Reverend Beverley Mitchell. He wore a sombre cassock and white surplice. The

service of the consecration of a bishop is as cleverly arranged as an operatic spectacle; it proves that the ancient worthies who composed the elements of the scene possessed a shrewd showman's eye to contrast. The protagonist of the occasion is introduced as the ugly duckling of the cast; it is his duty to make a positively ignominious entrance. By that stroke of managerial skill, the wily old potentates of yore heightened the effect of the final tableau, wherein the hero, tricked out in his new robes of state, holds the center of the stage and dwarfs the entire ensemble.

The Reverend Beverley felt within him no mystic fervor, no passionate exaltation as he walked down the aisle. For once in his life he was powerless to lose himself histrionically in the drama of the moment. He was angry and sick at heart. A weary disgust at the whole trumpery show possessed him. What was he, after all? The brow-beaten husband of a hard, scheming old harridan! What did his arrival on the pinnacle of his ambition mean to him? Nothing! He hated his doom of prosaic, dreary sanctity. He must needs degenerate now into a middle-aged hypocrite. With a burst of savage protest, he muttered to himself:

"She was mistaken—mistaken. If she'd never left me, it would have been different. With her beside me I could have fought and won."

Thus, in his progress to the chancel-rail, the perplexed clergyman was fighting off the thought that he had been jilted; it was evidence that his vanity was not quite dead yet. Edith Willmott had showed him the way of freedom and pagan joy; but she had not *trusted* him. There lay the cruel misfortune. She had ended by fearing for her own safety with him; she had become a coward. She had not believed that he would follow up his emancipation to the extent of breaking the shackles of the church. So—she had run away from him. The desire for security had triumphed over her love.

In his utter discouragement, the Reverend Beverley somehow was unable to

get any genuine satisfaction out of his silent groping arguments; they *didn't* convince him, they *didn't* salve his hurt. Their laboriously sophistical quality was manifest even to him.

Then, of a sudden, there rushed through his mind a half-formed thought; with desperation, he snatched at it, instinctively aware that it might be the comfort he was after. But it had vanished on the instant.

"I heard a sound of voices around the great white throne," came the exultant chant of the choir.

He had reached the chancel-rail. In his confused daze, he stumbled against the silver mace of a verger and felt himself being grasped solicitously by the arm.

The dignified service had begun. Mitchell's mind was by now a reeling blank. For a long time he realized nothing of what was going on. Then, as his consciousness returned by imperceptible degrees, he began to feel a soft warmth around his heart. He had awakened from his prostration to find himself too weak for further thought but intensely receptive.

As if in a dream, he took in the pomp and circumstance of the show; the music beat against his ears and his pulses strummed with the subterranean vibrations of the organ. Little by little, his emotional response grew stronger, until at last he seemed to be swirled hither and thither on a mystic tide of ecstasy. He was borne darkly and afar; he was no longer in a church—rather in a region of thunderous shocks and apocalyptic lightning flashes and riven skies. Scalding tears were in his eyes. He had risen to the occasion at last; he was like a modern Saint John the Divine, receiving his revelation on a new Patmos. As if he had counted his pulse beats, he was somehow able to perceive with a nice precision the exact state of his inspired frenzy.

In his replies to the questions of the presiding bishop, Mitchell had no sense that he was answering by rote; his ringing voice apparently issued from his throat with his volition. Repeating the

constitutional declaration, he seemed to hear the resonant words for the first time. Then, with a convulsive tremor through his frame, he realized he was kneeling by the altar in his robes.

The bishops had surrounded him in a close circle. He listened raptly to their solemn chant. Of a sudden, he became aware that their right hands were hovering above him. With shut eyes he felt the descent of those mighty hands which, touching his head, had converted him on the instant to a dignitary of episcopal rank.

Mitchell shivered slightly and opened his eyes. As he did so, the half-formed thought that had eluded his clutch a few moments before flashed its complete comfort across his mind. Edith Willmott had *not* come to an understanding with his successor on the steamer; she had brought suit for divorce in the hope of securing *him*, Beverley Mitchell. Then, convinced at

last that she had lost him, she had pathetically given herself to another; but she had been unable, in her wounded pride, to confess the truth of her plight.

When the ceremony of the laying on of hands was completed, the new bishop rose with dignity to his feet. His eyes were flashing again with the old pride and fearlessness; to all who met that falcon-like glance, it was evident that there stood revealed before them an indomitable warrior of the faith, who would fight the good fight without once swerving aside. The swift transfiguring flame that had leaped into his eyes had a special, almost a miraculous meaning—so it seemed to those who witnessed it.

It was as if, after the bishops had done with him, the Holy Spirit had descended upon him there at the altar, and, with the laying on of its ghostly hands, had given him an added consecration.

The End



Thunder

By John Hanlon

A WILD sky yawns,
Yellows and reds;—
Jove finds two truant fauns
And bumps their heads.



Woman

By L. G. Copes

A WOMAN is a unique affair. She is strong and weak, honorable and mean, cowardly and heroically courageous, cruel and kind, moral and unscrupulous. She is all these at once. Woman is man's salvation and damnation. She is his inspiration and despair. From her flow all blessings and all curses. She is the reason for all things. She is the center and standard of the world. All things are measured in terms of her. The measure of a man is his attitude toward woman. The measure of a woman is her attitude toward herself. Her splendor springs from self-valuation. Man's measure is determined by his valuation of woman. A man is what he receives from her: a woman is what she gives.



The Dark

By Virginia McCormick

THE light went out of the flame-swept sky,
Slipped silently through the western door . . .
The dark came in and crept and spread
Like water spilled upon the floor.

It covered the hills and the little streams
With a thick, black blanket whose ragged edge
Hid drowsy cattle and weary lambs,
Pressed closely against the sheltering hedge.

Then nearer it came where you sat with me,
And stared with its many twinkling eyes. . . .
It laid soft hands on our worried brows,
And held us with motherly little sighs.



Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

LE *Pécheur Malgré Lui*.—The expectation of their infidelity weighs very heavily upon a great many married men. It is the fixed tradition among women, quite unmovable by contrary evidence, that all men are libidinous fellows, and would engage incessantly in miscellaneous and degrading carnalities unless carefully watched. More, it is held that they manage to sin even *if* watched. The result is a vast mass of suspicions and accusations that have little, if any, basis in fact. A married woman who became absolutely convinced that her husband was faithful to her would feel that she had been somehow cheated, and so, in the absence of evidence, she invents it. If she embraced and told the truth, other women would dismiss her disdainfully as one married to a milksop, or pity her as one denied the normal feminine excuse for posturing as a martyr. The impact of this fiction is very demoralizing to men. Nine-tenths of them, at least in America, have no more impulse to betray their marriage vows than they have to murder their children, but public opinion demands that they pretend to a certain roguishness, even though innocent. It is hard, in consequence, to find a married man who shows any offense if accused of kissing the pretty parlor-maid behind the door, or of dining at some banal road-house with his stenographer. I have tried the thing on men of the utmost respectability; all of them snicker idiotically. It is a sad fact that this expectation of villainy plunges a great many otherwise

immaculate men into lamentable proceedings, sometimes leading to scandal. It is an even sadder fact that it fills the land with hypocrites.

§ 2

Criticism and Manners.—Of all the arts, criticism alone is made to suffer from, and struggle under, a burden of good manners. This spirit of gentlemanliness that has been imposed upon criticism has contrived to make it the weakest and most backward of the arts. For though good manners are held to be a desideratum of criticism, there is none so nonsensical as to maintain it to be a desideratum in any of the other arts. There can be little authentic criticism if manners are insisted upon: sound criticism must most often inevitably be something of a bounder. It is, for example, impossible to write absolutely sound criticism of H. G. Wells or of Cézanne or of even Molnar's play "Liliom" that is at the same time impersonal and hence well-mannered. Take the case of Molnar and his play. How can criticism translate exactly the present somewhat cloudy meaning and intent of the play save it indulge in a boorish pointing out of the impolite parallels between the play and the life and love of the man who wrote it? Yet this means is by public voice forbidden to criticism. No other art is forced to carry this millstone of good manners. Zola's "La Terre" is as ill-mannered as a fashionable New York stock-broker. The famous "Juno as a Madonna" is as vulgar, in the conventional sense of amenity, as Richard

Strauss' obstreperous "Feuersnot." Consider "Leda and the Swan," "Madame Bovary," "Die Götterdämmerung," "Œdipus Rex," the Venus di Medici, Rodin's young marble lovers wantonly sucking tongues in public without a stitch of clothing on. . . .

§ 3

The Other Fellow's Point of View.—Thus my friend, Prof. John Siddall, editor of the *American Magazine*, in a recent article on "Human Beings":

I remember a speech on advertising made by a New York advertising man, Mr. Elon G. Pratt. In his speech Mr. Pratt said that some advertisers never seem to learn that in their advertising they talk too much about themselves, and not enough about those to whom they would like to sell their goods. Then he drove his point home as follows: 'Too much advertising is written around the *I* of the advertiser rather than the *you* of the consumer.' That remarkable sentence, if taken to heart and acted on by those who are in need of its teaching, would be worth millions of dollars. It often represents the difference between failure and success—not only in all forms of business but in politics, journalism and the social relations. The man who refuses to use his imagination to enable him to look at things from the other fellow's point of view simply cannot exercise a wide influence. He cannot reach people.

Examples of men who refused to use their imaginations to enable them to look at things from the other fellow's point of view and who therefore simply could not exercise a wide influence: Christopher Columbus, Napoleon Bonaparte, Otto von Bismarck, George Washington. . . .

§ 4

A Dinner.—A cocktail of gin and pineapple juice; Spanish ham (gallego) with sardines Lemarchand and celery; gigote, Cuban style; red snapper steak with stuffed olive fritters and a glass of Sánchez Romate; a hot curry with warm Lübeck asparagus and a pint of Castell del Remey; a bowl of sweet pepper salad; guanabana; a

slice of Dutch cheese, a demi-tasse with a pony of brandy, and a Villar y Villar fancy tale. The price, \$3.50. The place, the Restaurant Con Terraza Los Dos Hermanos, Sol y San Pedro, Havana, Cuba.

§ 5

Episode and Comment.—One afternoon not long ago, one of my cronies called me up and in a hoarse voice bade me not fail to come to his apartment that evening as he had invited a girl whose beauty and charm, he would wager great odds, would promptly knock me clean off my feet. Affecting my customary air of boredom not without some difficulty—since the fellow, for all his past false alarms, seemed this time to be genuinely excited over his great discovery—I allowed that I would try to show up. Show up, of course, I did, and on time. And what is more, the gal lived up to the enthusiastic testimonial. She was extremely pretty; she was charming; she was gracious, amiable and easy to talk to. She knew how to drink a cocktail; she knew how to smoke a cigarette; she was privy to the winning tricks of significant silence and broken speech and mistrustful half-smiles. Yet I found myself, not fifteen minutes after I had dumped my hat into the umbrella jardinière, ready to go home. She didn't interest me worth a nickel. She had everything that I like, and yet she made no more impression on me than some dull old battle-ax might have. . . . Why, I don't know, and can't figure out. All men have such experiences. Perhaps they are but proofs of the infinite wisdom and humor of God.

§ 6

Panorama of Human Aspiration.—Police sergeants praying humbly to God that some Jew will start a poker-room on their posts, and so enable them to educate their eldest sons for holy orders. Newspaper reporters resolving firmly to work hard, keep sober and

be polite to the city editor, and so be rewarded with jobs as copy-readers. College professors in one-building universities on the prairie, still hoping, at the age of sixty, to get a whimsical essay into the *Atlantic Monthly*. Car-conductors on lonely suburban lines, trying desperately to save up \$500 and start a Ford garage. Pastors of one-horse little churches in decadent villages, who, whenever they drink two cups of coffee at supper, dream all night that they have been elected bishops. Movie actors who hope against hope that the next fan letter will be from Bar Harbor. Delicatessen dealers who spend their whole lives searching for a cheap substitute for the embalmed veal used in chicken-salad. Italians who wish that they were Irish. Mulatto girls in Georgia and Alabama who send away greasy dollar bills for bottles of Mme. Celestine's Infallible Hair-Straightener. New Congressmen who wish that they were as influential as Mr. Longworth and had the brains of Mr. Mondell. Ashmen who pull wires to be appointed superintendents of city dumps. Mothers who dream that the babes in their cradles will reach, in the mysterious after years, the highest chairs in the Red Men and the Maccabees. Farmers who figure that, with good luck, they will be able to pay off their mortgages by 1943. Contestants for the standing broad-jump championship of the Altoona, Pa., Y. M. C. A. Investors in Mexican mine stock, scanning the papers every morning for the latest pronunciamiento of Mr. Doheny. Editorial writers who prove mathematically that a war between England and the United States is unthinkable. Idealists who believe that Woodrow will be re-elected in 1924.

§ 7

Riposte Delicat.—In a gracious review of one of my recent critical lucubrations, the estimable Mr. A. B. Walkley, of the *London Times*, takes me to task in the matter of a detail. "The article," he writes, "is a plea for the

emancipation of criticism from every kind of 'law,' on the ground that art itself has been so emancipated, and criticism is only art of another kind. Upon this I would suggest to him that criticism is art in *form*, but its *content* is judgment, which takes it out of the intuitional world into the conceptual world."

A question. Is not such literature as, say, Mr. Wells' "The New Machiavelli," like criticism, art in *form* and its *content* judgment?

§ 8

The Great Southern Sport.—Whatever else may be charged against the South, it must be admitted that that region has perfected the most engrossing form of sport yet devised by the nimble and ingenious American mind. I allude, obviously, to Ku Klux Klaning. To believe that the hundred and one Klux organizations currently enjoying themselves south of the Mason-Dixon line are concerned with the dull and extrinsic business of improving the morals and ethical standards of their fellow citizens is to believe that the baseball nines in the National League are concerned with the work of the Church Federation and the Salvation Army. Ku Kluxing, like baseball or polo or strip poker, is a pastime pure and simple. Is there not as much boyish fun in dragging a swearing yokel out of his bed at 2 A. M. and smearing him up with tar and the stuffing of a feather sofa pillow as there is in hitting a leather ball with a fat stick or in watching Erasmo Kraus get down to his last B. V. D. when you draw a flush against his pair? Add to the sport of gumming up the yokel's epidermis the eternal boyish delight in wearing a mysterious badge, a fancy uniform and a romantic mask, and one begins to appreciate the true flavor of Ku Klux fun. So obvious is the merit of the sport that it is fast moving northward. Already, I understand, George Sterling has organized a corps in San Francisco and bought up several thousand second-

hand hotel bed-pillows, and a well-known Boston critic has put in a bid for the costumes used several years ago in Thomas Dixon's show, "The Clansman."

§ 9

Exit.—The Hapsburgs seem to be quite down and out. The archdukes of the house, once so steadily in the newspapers, are now heard of no longer, and the Emperor Karl appears to be a sort of moron, almost comparable to an American Congressman. But what a family in the past! To one member Haydn dedicated the Kaiser quartette, to another Beethoven dedicated the Erzherzog trio, and to a third old Johann Strauss dedicated the Kaiser waltz! Match that record in all human history!

§ 10

Love vs. Honor.—When a woman betrays the man who loves her, it is not the man's love that is outraged but his trust in the honor and decency of friendship. He feels that one in whom he has put faith and confidence—precisely the same sort of faith and confidence that he reposes in his closest male friend—has violated the rules of the game. Love has nothing, or at best very little, to do with his injured pride and general soreness. He is disgusted, not over the fact that his sweet one has given his heart the air, but over the fact that one whom he met on equal terms and treated fairly and squarely has turned Judas on him.

§ 11

Observation.—I look out of the window of my writing-room and note three flag-poles on the roofs of as many high buildings. The brass balls at the tops of the poles are immaculately polished. It occurs to me to speculate on the idiocy of hiring men to climb to the tops of flag-poles on high buildings in order to polish brass balls.

§ 12

Proof of the Pudding.—In the last analysis, the most devastating of all the critics of democracy are the democrats. The louder they bawl for the theory of it, the more diligently they reduce it to an absurdity by their practise. The reason is not far to seek. The inferior man, for all his tall talk, simply cannot rid himself of his congenital timorousness, his fear to stand alone and unprotected, his thirst to be bossed. This explains the astounding regimentation of opinion under democracy. All ideas must come down from above; once they come down they are embraced with pathetic fidelity. In the United States of today there is less independent thinking than in any other country known to history—and more unyielding certainty. On every subject that is comprehensible to him at all the *Boobo sapiens* has a fixed and immovable opinion—and every one of them was inserted into his occipital shell by some master-mind who, seizing the opportunity presented by the ensuing joy and fermentation, simultaneously picked his pocket. Thus all public ideas, in a democracy, are the inventions of scoundrels.

§ 13

Theological Reflections.—Every Saturday, in each of the large cities of the Republic and most of the smaller ones, the leading newspaper gives over a page or two to advertisements of church services on the day following. These advertisements are frequently of large size and great showiness, and exhibit all the arts of the leg-show press-agent or side-show barker. It is not uncommon, indeed, to find some Methodist or Baptist gentleman of God announcing a sermon with a title containing a plain hint of the scandalous, and even the obscene. Whole series of discourses are preached on such subjects as "Night Life in Bingville," "How Our Girls Are Ruined" and "Secrets of the Dance-Halls." And to help out the fascinating flow of nouns, verbs, adjectives and ad-

verbs, and the chautauqual gyrations of the impassioned holy clerk, there is a gaudy emission of more or less agreeable and uplifting music. Many of the churches advertise choirs as large as comic-opera choruses, and offer programmes as attractive as those of pop-concerts in the old days of malt liquor.

But the advertisements are more interesting than the services, however startling the latter may be. I always read these advertisements on Saturdays, and entertain myself by picking out a house of worship to attend on Sunday morning, if, perchance, the impulse to go to one ever seizes me, which so far in my forty years in this terrestrial hell, it never has. One thing I notice invariably: that all of the announcements are of Protestant churches. The Catholics, unless I am singularly unobservant, never advertise at all. No one apparently knows, before getting into the church, what the parish priest is to talk about. There is no preliminary publication of the music programme. Vice-crusaders, missionaries from India and itinerant collectors for the Anti-Saloon League are never in the pulpit to help the regular pastor. . . . Now for the moral. Some time ago a newspaper in a large and typical American city took a church census one Sunday morning. The results were curious. All of the Catholic churches, which never advertise, were crowded, and some of them had five or six services. And all of the Protestant churches, including those which advertised most heavily and sensationally, were empty.

§ 14

Anonymous Letters.—I often wonder just what satisfaction is derived by the writers of anonymous insulting letters. However thin-skinned a man may be, he can't very well be insulted by a person he does not know and has never heard of, and of whose existence, name and position he is completely unaware. However tender one's epidermis, one can't conceivably be bothered very much by the nose-fingerings of an indiscernible ghost.

§ 15

One Instance.—Returning recently to America on one of the great ocean liners, I spent an hour one afternoon making a round of the decks and noting the literary tastes of my fellow countrymen and countrywomen sprawled in the deck chairs. I counted, in all, fifty-three readers, about evenly divided as to sex. Without a single exception, the men had their eyes glued to trash. With but two exceptions, the women were reading respectable literature.

§ 16

Memory Test.—To those many amiable persons who boast of their theatrical memories, I offer these names of the leading characters in the most successful and most widely known farce comedy of the American stage of some years ago, and ask the name of the play: Christopher Bluff, Whirlem O'Rourke, Nois E. Howell, Ginger Whipsaw, Jobson Doodle, Kitty Malone, Jimpsy. . . .

Ten answers in ten will name the play as one of Charles H. Hoyt's. It was not. What, and whose, was it?

§ 17

The American Language.—I spend a good deal of time reading the manuscripts of American authors, chiefly bad. The business convinces me that the word *alright* is gradually establishing itself in the American language. For some obscure reason or other, probably snobbish and idiotic, I detest this neologism, and if it ever gets into this great literary magazine, that day I shall shave my head. But it is making progress none the less, and I often find it in print. Philologically, it is quite sound. If *altogether* is sound English, then *alright* is also sound English. I also note that *to deduct* is making progress. For some reason or other it strikes a good many authors as a more logical verb-form of *deduction* than *to deduce*. It is a symptom of that growing regularization which, on the plane of the common speech, has made

regular verbs of *to beat*, *to blow*, and even, with a vowel change, *to write*. A few other verbs, curiously enough, grow irregular, chiefly by archaic affectation. One such is *to dive*. In a great many manuscripts the preterite appears as *dove*. I find it in that form in Amy Lowell's "Legends."

§ 18

Note on American Society.—I spent the week-end not long ago at a coun-

try house in New England in which the first butler was addressed by my distinguished host and charming hostess as *M'sieu*.

§ 19

The War With Japan.—They say that there must be no war with Japan, for the Japanese are a thrifty, hard-working, home-loving, studious and progressive people. In July, 1914, they were still describing the Germans with exactly the same adjectives.



Everest

By George Sterling

WHO views thee from the plain
 Shall dream of coolness, not the icy storm
 That on the bosom of thy mighty form
 Is but a stain.

Who sees thine altar-snows
 Shall muse on vastness and serenity,
 Not know what winds are evermore on thee,
 Above repose.

Who views thee from afar
 Shall ponder on Time's magnitude, nor guess
 Thine evanescence and thy nothingness
 Below the star.

Untrod, unshared, apart,
 Oh snows where none shall dare, nor wish, to dwell!
 Oh summit lone and inaccessible
 Within each heart!



A Homecoming

By Ruth Suckow

I

SPRING VALLEY was a town of retired farmers. One of those slow, pretty, leafy towns beside a quiet river, that seemed never to move at all.

Still, it was moving. The old settlers could sadly note changes here and there. In the last ten years it had been growing from a country town to a very small city. People had bridge parties instead of great suppers at the Grange. There was a new bank building with a Rest Room, a new Hotel, electroliers down Main Street; and gradually the two blocks of paving in the "business part" had lengthened out down East Street, down to where the houses began to straggle out and sweet clover to bank the roadsides. Building was chiefly on East Street. Square white houses with sleeping porches and stout white porch pillars. An occasional out-of-place bungalow, and a near-bungalow with the upper story painted yellow and the lower white. Here and there was a gaping wound in the earth where one of the old houses—low, painted dark, covered with wooden gingerbread—had been uprooted to make place for a new.

Automobiles went down this pavement, taking the Lincoln Highway to Golden Prairie.

Summer Street, a short cross street on which few houses faced, and which only the postman knew by name, went through East Street. It was almost forgotten. The unpaved road was too rutted for pleasure driving. The crossings were poor. After a few blocks the street went into a country road with

a field on one side and willows on the other, and ended with a dingy white farmhouse with a sign: "Comb Honey For Sale."

There was a feeling of darkness on this little street, as in an old room. The trees had grown very large. Near the street corners their great twisted roots lay bare and gray on the dusty ground from which the grass had worn away. In the summer, leaf shadows flickered in and out across the gray road.

The houses were of the older type, of white frame mostly, and looked as if they had been long lived in. The bushes had spread out; weather-beaten chairs and stools stood out under the big trees. One house had a little spiked iron fence on the roof, above a border of green-painted shingles. Another had trimmings of dingy brown. One had a great pine tree growing in front of the door. One was of brick with Gothic windows and a little Gothic porch painted yellow, so that it looked like a small Presbyterian church. The lawns had old-fashioned flowers grown too thick—petunias by the front walls, close to the damp stone foundations, cosmos and zinnias—and fruit trees in the backyards. One expected old couples whose children had gone, or widows, or spinsters, to be living in these houses.

The old Haviland house was the largest on the street. It was built in a plain, spacious style that had worn well. But it had been closed for so long that it added to the faintly musty, gloomy atmosphere of Summer Street.

It was white, with long windows rounded at the top. It had a narrow porch with thin posts cut in a severe

pattern. It was one of those houses "built onto," so that as one passed it from the side it kept lengthening out and out.

It was a corner house. There was a vacant pasture across the road from it, filled with dandelions all summer long, and with those silver-green plummy grasses.

At the side, two old blue-green fir trees shed needles upon bare patches of earth. A forked catalpa tree grew in the backyard, and bushes of lilac and syringa. Of all the flowers only these bushes were left, and pink peonies beside the front step; but short-stemmed blue violets grew wild at the edges of the sidewalk on the south. Old Man Shardlow cut the lawn and cared for the lilacs and syringas, and Old Mrs. Shardlow picked the peonies.

At the back of the lot stood a large white barn with a round window in the front gable. From this a grape-hung trellis led to a tool-house, now leaning slightly with age.

II

THIS June, people passing said:

"Some of the Havilands must be back. The place seems to be opened up."

The long, gray-green window shades with fringed ends were up. A window was open. The paneled front door, although closed, no longer had a locked-up look.

"It must be Laura," they said, eyeing the place.

The Havilands were some of the very old residents of Spring Valley, but some of those who scatter and die away instead of growing great in the town. John Haviland had died so long ago that now only the old merchants spoke of him. His name was gone from the store. It was now: J. C. Fairweather, Dry Goods and Notions. But some old people still talked of going to Haviland's.

His son Ned had sold out the business years ago and gone West. He was known to have married there and

to have gone into the automobile business in Denver. But he had practically cut loose from Spring Valley.

Mrs. Haviland, not long after her husband's death, had begun to travel. First she had gone to Europe, then she had begun to follow pleasant weather from state to state. She had spent her winters in Florida and California and her summers in the mountains. She had come back to Spring Valley only for a few months at a time, when her church had welcomed her, and her club, the Priscillas, had given a basket picnic for her. She said that she found the Iowa climate too trying. It was said of her that she had never been well. Still, everyone was surprised when she had died two years ago; and old ladies meeting each other had cried, while still some distance apart—"Well, have you heard that Mrs. Haviland is dead?"

Since her death the house had not been opened.

Now it was discovered to be true that Laura Haviland was back.

Laura Haviland had always traveled with her mother, taking care of her. People wondered now whether she would stay, or "what she *would* do." She was "well fixed," they thought, and need not do anything. It was rather queer she hadn't stayed out West with her brother, but then you never could tell. Perhaps she would take up her music again.

Those who had seen her "this time" said that she looked better than she had "last time." The old lady, in the last few years especially, had been a lot of care.

They conjectured that Laura Haviland must now be thirty-six or seven. But since she had neither married nor taught school, she was still spoken of as Laura Haviland.

III

THE old lady who lived in the Gothic house, and who knew everyone although almost everyone had forgotten her, was most interested in the opening of the Haviland house.

Conjecture as to what Laura Haviland meant to do gave her a new lease of life. She scrutinized various articles hung out to air and kept a close watch for all comings and goings. There seemed to be so few of these that she was almost driven to stopping Old Mrs. Shardlow, to whom she "did not speak," but who was helping at the Havilands', and getting some information out of her.

"Now I just wonder—d'you s'pose she's goin' to stay? They ain't much baggage come—wonder why she don't stay with the brother?" she kept pondering.

After a day or two she saw something that made her part the curtains and squint between them.

"Ain't that Mrs. Hubert Barr driving up to the Haviland place? She must be going to see Laura Haviland. Let's see, they was friends, wasn't they? Wasn't she one of the Wilson girls—or wasn't she? I b'lieve she was. Now, who did the other one marry?"

She was able to see Mrs. Hubert Barr bring her car skilfully to the curb and alight, and to note that she wore what seemed to be a white silk skirt and a sleeveless green satin jacket.

"My, how that young set does dress! Well, I guess she can afford it!" the old lady said—but she could not tell whether or not Mrs. Barr went into the Havilands'.

But she did go up the walk that was slightly sunken and grass-grown, and mounted the shallow step to the porch. She rang the bell which pulled out with a little jagged brass handle. It gave a worn, gasping clank that jarred the panels of the door slightly.

Mrs. Barr glanced coolly about her. When softened footsteps sounded from within, her attitude became expectant.

As soon as the door was opened, she stepped quickly inside, cried: "Well—Lau—ra!" and she and Laura Haviland kissed warmly.

They stood for a moment in the chill of the long, dark hallway, then passed through an archway into the front room.

This room seemed spacious because of the high ceiling. It had always a kind of dusk and coolness, and just now a dimly musty air. The furniture was miscellaneous, added to at different times, yet all gave the effect of old-fashioned darkness. There were several chairs with oval backs, upholstered in brown, an armchair and settee. There was a high-backed rocking-chair with a seat of flowered satiny stuff, a mahogany table and cabinet, a black marble fireplace. An oil painting—*Autumn Woods*—done by a sister of Mrs. Haviland's, hung in a massive silvered frame. Another high archway opened into the further gloom of the living-room, where a grand piano and a two-part cherry-wood table were just visible.

Mrs. Barr sat down on the oval-backed settee, and Laura Haviland sat near her. Now the warmth and cheer of their first embrace died away. They were conscious of familiar things and changes in each other.

Laura Haviland had changed little since Mrs. Barr had last seen her, but very much since what seemed the days of the real Laura Haviland, the Spring Valley days. Then, there had always been an effect of joyousness about her—spring and apple blossoms. Now, even her smile left a lingering impression of sadness.

She was still slender, with something of girlishness about her if not youth. She was fragile and worn, and it seemed somehow pitiful that this should be so—it made one angry at the world. Her face, thin and subtly faded, had a rare quality of sweetness. The skin that had been like apple blossoms was fine still, but a little drawn. Under the eyes there were faint bluish-brown shadows like old bruises. The eyes, perhaps because of these shadows and the lids, made one see them as violet, although their color was gray-blue. Blue veins were traced on her slender hands, veins of blue and lilac at the temples. Her hair was parted, very fine, brown, and turned to silver-gold at the sides.

She wore dark blue silk, finely and yet not really fashionably made, as if she did not quite dare fashion.

Mrs. Barr was a contrast—firmness and vigor, modishness, with thick auburn hair and a fresh, coarse skin, her strong hand with its familiar emerald ring stroking carelessly the rough white silk of her skirt.

Yet it was as the old lady remembered—they had been friends, and there had been no incongruity.

There was suddenly a vague sense of embarrassment between them. To break it, Mrs. Barr said abruptly:

"Why didn't you let a fellow know you were back?"

Laura smiled at something characteristic in the question. "Well, I've meant to, Gertrude, but somehow I haven't got straightened around enough yet to do anything. I've only been here two days."

"Come Tuesday?"

"Monday."

"Oh, yes, of course!"

Laura touched her hands softly together on her knee and looked into the dimness of the living-room. The fir branches outside grated faintly against each other.

Gertrude moved restlessly and said, with an effect of effort:

"We expected you a long while ago."

"Yes, I suppose so." Laura looked slightly embarrassed. "I expected it myself. It's dreadful to let things go so long. But Mabel had her breakdown, and it seemed they needed me. I might have come before,—but there's so much to see to here!"

She glanced anxiously about the orderly rooms, where both were conscious of a bareness and an odor of neglect.

"Haven't Grandpa and Grandma Shardlow done their duty?" Mrs. Barr asked flippantly.

"Oh, yes, they've kept things nicely. But it isn't the same."

"No."

There were things missing in the room—the cloisonné vase which had always stood on the cabinet, the calla

lily on the marble-topped stand by the south window—and other things which could not be named but which left an emptiness.

"The petunias in front are all gone," Laura said sadly. "There'll be none of our old flowers left soon, I'm afraid."

"You must stay and look after them."

"Yes—" A look of reserve came over Laura's face.

Mrs. Barr scrutinized her from behind an apparently careless air. It was evident that Laura had been working herself to death again for someone—Ned's wife, that "Mabel," probably. Mrs. Barr stigmatized Mabel as "a piece." She had always felt angry with Ned and Mrs. Haviland for simply running over Laura the way they did, but now she was angry with Laura herself. Laura was her own mistress now. There was no need of it. She should look after herself. She broke out accusingly:

"I thought that *this* time I'd see you looking like yourself. But you're all tired out again as usual. What was it—Mrs. Ned's breakdown?"

"Oh, no!" said Laura, flushing a faint rose. "Mabel has been better for some time. I haven't been doing much anyway, at any time. It was more to have me there."

Then, feeling an implied criticism of "Mrs. Ned," she added:

"Mabel is such a wonderful person. You'd like her, Gertrude. There isn't anything she can't do. That's the trouble—she does too much. But she is so much in demand—she's very popular in Denver."

Mrs. Barr raised her eyebrows courteously but unbelievably.

Laura flushed and was silent.

"Now that you're here, you'd better take a real rest for once," Mrs. Barr observed. "Heaven knows you've come to the place for it! There's nothing, absolutely nothing—I've never known even Spring Valley to be so hopeless."

"Oh, tell me about things!" Laura seized upon the topic with eager relief.

"Something's happened, I'm sure. I know it always seems when I come as if everything's happened."

"Well, let's see. Yes, I suppose it would seem as if even Spring Valley had moved to anyone who's been away— You heard about the Baptist church burning, of course."

"Oh, yes, I heard about that. It's such a shame. Will they ever build it up again, do you suppose?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Barr lightly. "They have about ten members, I think—eleven, counting the janitor."

"Why, they used to have a good congregation, didn't they?"

"Oh, my dear, no one goes to church any more except the Methodists. They always seem to for some reason or other."

"I haven't heard anything for so long," Laura said. "I always used to count on Mrs. Bird to write me things, but since her eyes have failed so she hasn't been able to write. I'm afraid she's grown very feeble, dear old lady."

Laura's voice died away sadly. Again they heard the fir branches grating.

Mrs. Barr had almost forgotten old Mrs. Bird. Mention of her gave her a sense of how long Laura had been away. Old Mrs. Bird was no longer in the life of Spring Valley.

"Don't you get the wonderful *Sig-nal*?" she asked.

"Not since it's changed hands. So many of mother's old friends used to write to her, and in that way I heard things, but of course—"

"Well, I suppose you want to hear about the old crowd first," Mrs. Barr said briskly. "Not that there's much to tell. Of course you know that Jim and Agnes have separated?"

"They have—finally?"

"Oh, yes, it's come to that. And I'm glad of it. When two people can't be in the same room together without bickering, it's time to make ways part. Why, Laura, I've seen Jim and Agnes go to the Thursday Club, one on one

side of the street and one on the other, and then go up the steps as if they'd come together. That's a fact. And now since Jim's taken up with this Miss Finch—oh, my dear, didn't you know that? Oh, yes, it's common gossip. She's the damsel who has the new millinery department at Ewing's. Well, I can see what there is about her—but just the same, that doesn't excuse *Jim*."

She went on with numerous items of "Jen," "Clara," "Ed," "Harry," recounting deaths, births and supposed love affairs, an occasional abrupt, "Oh, Burts have built their new house," or "Rawsons have a new car at last. I suppose Jen wouldn't give Austin any peace until he finally gave in to it." Lawrence Parsons had "failed," she said. And "wasn't it dreadful about Mr. Goodlake? The last person on earth you would have dreamed could have taken a cent that didn't belong to him. It simply broke Hubert all up." Old houses had been sold, new ones built; the Bissels had sold out and gone to California; the Kleins had moved in from the country; Herbert Nixon had been killed in France; old Mrs. Burt had died, and the old man wouldn't last much longer; so many of the old residents had died off lately.

As Laura listened, a web of sad-tinged thoughts floated dreamily through her mind. Everything was so familiar. At the same time she seemed great distances away.

The painful things seemed in so much greater proportion than the pleasant. Every time that she came back to Spring Valley there were more. It seemed to her that of all the "old crowd," only Gertrude had been fortunate. Alice, too, was prosperous and very gay; but her little son had been burned to death and there was always a kind of wild glitter in her eyes. Mary was dead, Jim and Agnes were unhappy, no one knew what had become of Oswald, Vanchie had "lost her husband" and was working in Oklahoma, Selma had gone insane. It seemed to her that she was far from all these

things. But she had not lived at all.

She watched Gertrude as she talked. Gertrude was wholly absorbed. She was on familiar ground now. This was her life. She was entirely unaware of Laura's sense of painful detachment—she took it for granted evidently that Laura was as absorbed as she.

"I don't know—I've been away so long," Laura would have to say at intervals. Gertrude would look at her uncomprehendingly and go on.

Gertrude was settled now. It was in her air, in the expression of her eyes, not in her firm, trim body which had seemingly not grown a day older. It was that she was no longer receptive. She was fixed. She expected nothing.

Laura thought, "I am not fixed. But do I expect anything?"

A terrible weariness came over her.

She could see that Gertrude took the kind of interest in all these details that she remembered her mother and her mother's friends had taken when she had heard them talking years ago, in this same room. What was it?—it was that they were bounded by the world they spoke of. Gertrude was bounded now by Spring Valley. Before, her tales had been dramatic; she had not been quite absorbed.

She observed that Gertrude avoided Mark Edwards's name whenever she could, and that when she did speak it her tone was conscious. Laura smiled somewhat bitterly. It was a part of what Gertrude could not comprehend. She had been away from Mark so long. It seemed strange that Gertrude should still be thinking of him in connection with her. He was no longer in her heart. But there was an emptiness there.

Yet, after all, there was a kind of consciousness of him that enveloped her whenever she came to Spring Valley—ghostly, like the sense of her old life in this place, a kind of mist. It was vaguely mingled with the leafiness and dimness, the scent of syringa bushes. It came over her at strange moments—when the light fell a certain

way across the black top of the piano, when she passed the big oak at Wilson's corner, when the breeze came in at her window in the morning and stroked her skin mysteriously. Not the thought of Mark exactly—rather the memory of a thought—an elusive pain.

"I must go. Heavens!"

Gertrude glanced at her wrist watch.

"My infants are howling at this moment."

"Oh!" Laura exclaimed in dismay.

"Why, Gertrude, I haven't asked after them. How is Doris? Does she still have a beautiful dark bang? And the little one I've never seen. Think of it! Jane Elizabeth—"

"Um-hum!" Gertrude's eyebrows went up significantly. "Don't you run away without seeing that young prodigy this time. Doris asked me this morning if I was going to see Aunt Laura."

Soft rose flooded Laura's cheeks again. "Oh, Gertrude, why didn't you bring her?"

"Oh, my dear, I'd rather go nowhere than attempt to take that child. She's inherited all her mother's wickedness. It's a judgment on me."

"Nonsense!" Laura laughed. "I'll risk her."

Her lips grew wistful. It seemed to her that she had more in common with Gertrude's children than with Gertrude. Her heart ached at the thought of Doris as she had seen her last—solemn dark eyes and a bang lying like a soft, dark cloud on her pearly forehead. But Doris was older now—perhaps not so poignantly, woundingly sweet. Now, there was little Jane Elizabeth—

Laura followed Gertrude out into the hallway. It was even darker than the parlor. The musty smell was stronger.

Gertrude turned.

"Now, Laura, come to see me."

"Indeed, Gertrude, I'll try to."

Laura tried not to feel the effort with which they both spoke. Trying to revive something that was past. Did Gertrude understand it? There was a kind of half-heartedness when she said, "Don't you let anyone work you to death now."

Laura glanced half-humorously, half-sadly, about the empty place. "I don't think anyone will."

Gertrude shivered—turned it into a shrug.

"I don't see how you can stay here alone. Can't you get some one to stay with you—nights at least? Old Mrs. Bird—wouldn't she?" she asked vaguely.

"Oh, no," Laura smiled sadly to herself. Old Mrs. Bird—she had scarcely gone beyond her own front step for years. "I don't mind it at all, really."

"You must come to our house whenever you do. Any time."

"Thanks, Gertrude. That's lovely of you. But I don't mind—really."

Gertrude looked unconvinced.

The white-tipped pegs of the old hall seat gleamed weirdly through the dim light. Wraps had hung upon them once—Ned's caps, Laura's straw hat with roses, her little jacket. Ned had run in and out of this hall, banging the door which had never dared look so austere, so slow to move, in those days. But those days were so very long ago. Scarcely possible.

The vision of Mrs. Haviland was everywhere in the house. Gertrude could see her, as she meant to tell Alice, with a shiver—her figure, plump and slumped together, in black with a lace collar, her face a moist white, multitudinously wrinkled, with a bagging double chin, her small, slightly reddened eyes, her yellow-white hair with a silver-backed comb stuck into the thin strands at the back, the neat crimps in front. Laura always close, tired and yet gently eager, hovering over her. Gertrude meant to tell Alice that Laura was "terribly faded," "all used up."

"You simply can't get away from her in that house. I don't see how Laura can stay there," she would say.

A look of curiosity came into her eyes. She carefully kept it from her voice as she said:

"Perhaps you'll go on with your music now."

"I don't know. I haven't decided—

I must put my affairs in order here before I do anything."

Laura was again reserved; a perception of that lurking curiosity came upon her—Gertrude curious, caring about details!—how terribly disappointing life could be. Gertrude would tell someone else, they would talk. She felt slightly sick. She remembered how she had slept with Gertrude, how they had laughed and whispered half the night—then Mr. Wilson's stentorian "You girls go to sleep or I'll take a stick to you both!" from his bedroom, and Gertrude smothering her laugh in the pillow until she snorted.

"Are you free on Friday? Could you come to us for dinner?" Gertrude asked somewhat formally.

"Thank you, Gertrude. I'd like to very much."

"We usually eat at six—Hubert gets home about then. But come early."

"Well, if I can—I'm so anxious to see the children. Hubert, too. I haven't asked about him. How is he?"

"Oh, *pret-ty* well," Gertrude said disparagingly. "He kills himself for that old bank—but then no power on earth can keep him from it. Well, you come!"

She was brisk again, full of the business of getting away.

Laura stood in the doorway, a smile fixed uncomfortably upon her lips, until the car was gone.

When she had closed the door, the lonely silence of the hall was like her own element after a strange one.

But gradually it seemed to engulf her in a heavy sadness. The thick, stale air was unbroken, the chairs all waiting for something.

She wandered into the living-room. Two pale bars of light shone upon the floor from under the window shade—wavered, retreated. The old brown clock should have been ticking in the kitchen—as on her mother's club days when she had come home from school into the empty house, a sweet warm emptiness, time of her own. Time of her own now—all of it. The fir branches grated outside.

She sat down on the old brown

carpet and leaned her head against the leather couch that stood by the three windows. The things that Gertrude had told her repeated themselves in her mind. Jim, Agnes, Selma, Alice—she felt wounded, hurt all over.

She kept seeing Gertrude with painful acuteness—the things she had always liked—brisk, strong movements, reddish-brown hair growing crisply up from the temples—these things hurt because of the small, settled look in Gertrude's eyes. There was no longer Gertrude to look forward to here. That was over. The heart was gone out of it. She felt that they would always have to be very polite, and pretend they did not know, until their old intimacy had gradually, decorously died out of itself.

Not even old Mrs. Bird—feeble, no longer acute, telling the same stories over and over again.

She was at home. She looked about the room—familiar, unfamiliar. More real than any other place, and yet not real at all. Part present, part past.

Six by her watch.

"I must eat," Laura whispered.

She put her hand on the couch to raise herself and went slowly out into the strange, dusty loneliness of the kitchen.

The old lady in the Gothic house, as soon as she heard the sound of the car, had hobbled from her kitchen, where she was frying potatoes, to the window.

"Hm! That's where she *did* go, all right. I thought so," she said.

IV

Dusk was like a deepening of the gloom in the old Haviland house.

Laura put away the old brown-rimmed dishes that she was using while she was "by herself." She took up the book that she had brought from Denver, that Mabel had called delightful—a hard, brilliant thing, as hard as glass. Its hardness, and sureness, hurt her. She put it down. Where were books tender enough for her weariness? "Cranford"—but there was something

deeper than "Cranford." Where were books tender, and yet deep?

After a while she wandered outside.

Twilight came early to the shaded dimness of Summer Street. The west, behind Parsons' house across the street, was still rose-tinged, the rest of the sky dove-gray. Cars sounded—but they seemed a long way off. The wet grass was full of insects; there was a twitter of birds about the house.

The old Shardlows sat in two dingy chairs on their porch, never saying a word to each other. That was more lonely than solitude. These houses were full of old people.

Laura went into the backyard, which had once been full of flowers. Now there were only the bushes, and the lilacs were already brown, the syringa petals fallen. Yet there was a faint scent of them—a thought of Mark. . . . The grass under the catalpa tree was sprinkled with white, ruffly blossoms etched in sepia. The forked trunk showed black against the evening sky. The fir trees were a blur of bluish dusk.

Barn swallows swooped in low curves about the gable of the barn. Insects were thick about the grape vine on the trellis. The old tool-house seemed to lean farther, wearily.

The grass had a crust of dew. Laura picked her way to the walk at the side—it ended with the Haviland lot. As she looked down she discovered one dark-blue violet still blooming in its nest of shadowy leaves. She exclaimed softly, bent down, but did not pick it.

"Darling—beautiful," she whispered.

These violets they had brought from the woods long ago. She and Mary had planted them. They had meant to have a border all along the walk, as in English gardens. But these were wild violets—they had scattered themselves through the grass in their own shy, vagrant way; and they still came up each spring for little girls to find.

"I wonder if the spring beauties—" Laura thought.

Spring beauties—tender, pink-white on thin, dark, glossy stems. . . . She hurried to the north of the house, and

half knelt, feeling about with her hand on the wet black earth beside the little cobwebbed cellar window. The lilac bushes made it dark here. The spring beauties were gone—the grass grew up to the space of bare mould next to the house foundation.

It was terribly silent there. Laura turned and fled into the house.

She lit the reading lamp in the living-room, leaving the corners of the room in shadow. She did not want to read.

She opened the black cover of the grand piano, sat down and touched softly a few of the yellowish keys.

"Oh, I can't *play*," she thought in distress.

Her fingers stayed on the keys. She felt a strange powerlessness to make them move. Not in the fingers themselves—somewhere within herself.

"Go on with your music now . . ." Gertrude had said. Ned, too, when their mother had died—"Laura must take up her music again." She felt music as a great load, and she trying to lift it—but stuck tight to the ground, grass-grown, like a stone she had seen somewhere.

She thought dispassionately that now she could do what she had sat here longing to do, years ago, here on this bench—she could go to Boston and study. She had money, if she used it carefully. Yet a feeling deeper than any resolution or desire said that she would not.

She could go anywhere. To Florida, gray moss and strange flowers . . . the Rockies, Oregon, California, the beach. If someone in one of these places would send for her. . . . But no one would. Mabel would send for her, and she would go back to Denver, then here again. She was not happy here. But she knew it. It was not going on from place to place.

She thought of herself at twenty, when her mother and she had left the first time for Florida. How she had felt aching, bleeding, as if she had been torn up by the roots. How she had said to Mark: "We will *cer*-tainly be home in the spring." So they had—

and then had had to go again. Her mother's need of her creeping about her like tendrils, fastening on her and holding her tight. She had said to Mark: "I feel . . . it isn't fair to you"—and his always unbelievable acquiescence. That same year he had married a girl from Fort Weston.

But suppose he had waited . . . until now? She knew how people had said that her mother made a slave of her. Old Mrs. Bird saying: "You will have your reward, Laura, dear," so wisely.

All these things she surveyed with a sad wonder. She wished she could feel again the aching hurt of the earlier days. There was almost fear when she felt how her energies had been sapped. Her life seemed drawn out of her.

She spread out her white fingers—large-knuckled, a musician's fingers—moved them up and down in one of her old finger exercises. They were supple still . . . lifeless.

When her watch said nine she permitted herself to go to bed.

She lay on the little white iron bed that had been her girlhood bed.

The air came softly in, as it had done then, upon her bare arms and neck; and with it the scent of the night.

In all the empty house there was no one to call for her. She could sleep now, as she had so often longed to do. But this was surely not freedom. She could wish for that passionate care of her mother that had kept her sense of life. She had been of use, even if worked beyond all limits of her strength.

What could make her wish to wake in the morning? Mark—that again? She could not even wish for Mark—that was dead. Someone else. . . . Oh no, that was impossible even for desire. If there were some small thing in a little bed?

Her eyes stared wide into the lilac dusk. It was true, it had come to pass—what she had been born for was not hers.

Nothing was hers, but the old house, the trees, the fallen petals on the lawn.

V

It was such a warm, still night—everything hushed with a beautiful secret silence. Until very late the motor cars went up and down East Street where the clock in the court-house tower hung pale in the dusk like a moon. White bands of light went ahead of them and lighted a curb or a tree.

One full of boys and girls rolled smoothly, blithely along. The boy at the wheel made a tentative turn at Summer Street, where the big trees stood

mysteriously pleasant. One of the girls called out petulantly:

"Oh, no, Bob! Not down there. That's such a rutty old road."

"Aw—looks nice."

"Um-um, Bob." Another boy's voice. "Doesn't go anywhere."

"No, of course it doesn't. There's a house at the end. Go on straight."

"Oh, all right. If you all know so much. . . ."

The car sped lightly on. The brief radiance of the big corner tree was quenched again in shadows.



Unimportant

By Dorothy Dow

HOW should I remember
When the storms blow,
Who taught me laughter
Ages ago . . . ?

Might not some petals fall
Rend me with pain,
If I should recollect
Passion again—?

O, summer and winter
Are far apart;
I have forgotten
Who broke my heart.



AT last in the nineteenth century the world's greatest detectives have discovered that the finger-tips of no two persons are exactly the same. Perhaps in several million more years of steady progress some great man will venture to assert that no two persons are exactly alike in any respect.

The Man With One Talent

By John D. Swain

I

ALL of the men who foregathered on winter nights around the cannon-ball stove in Snow's Groceries and West India Goods store chewed tobacco. Mostly they affected fine cut, but Ben Sayres masticated a peculiarly black and pungent twist. And while the others spat into the square sand box provided for the purpose, Ben used the open door of the stove.

He was by far the oldest man in Brandford, and he was shut off from his fellows by the wall of silence, having been deaf for three decades. The gregarious instinct drew him night after night to sit with these neighbors whose arguments and budgets of news he could not hear, and who looked upon him with the good-natured tolerance they felt toward some decrepit hound whom they could not bring themselves to kill even though he had outlived his usefulness as a hunter.

Long habit had assigned to each his own niche in the general store. Thus, one of the two armchairs was always occupied by Capt. Baker, who had been a whaler in his young manhood. The other one was reserved for Snow himself, whose store—in addition to the varied assortment to be found in all country emporiums—carried sundry articles peculiar to Cape Cod; such as oilskins and gear, fishing tackle, clam hooks, cranberry rakes and the like.

The pickle keg was sacred to Elisha Dennis, the sexton. A backless chair to Parker, the cranberry grower. Orrin Bates, the hunter, always sat on the

drygoods counter. Old Ben Sayres used a cracker box about ten feet from the stove, which was a famous heater and whose door was always left open. It was into this small opening that he shot, from time to time, an exceedingly accurate stream of black and bitter tobacco juice. He never missed, and rarely did a drop hiss against the rim of the opening.

His marksmanship, long familiar to all the men who made of Snow's store a forum, elicited an occasional good-humored comment. Sexton Dennis once remarked that it was a pity that spitting was not a recognized sport, as Brandford would have had in Ben Sayres a champion who would have put the town on the map.

On the rare occasions when the attention of the others was directed toward him, the bright eyes of the old man passed from one to another of the faces he knew. He could not understand what they said; but his infirmity permitting him to catch or half gather a word or phrase here and there, he drew from them absurdly inaccurate meanings of his own, and replied, not to what had been said, but to what he supposed to have been said. These guesses caused unfailing mirth, and made him restless and uncomfortable. Sometimes he would leave in a temper, vowing to come no more; but the following night would find him perched on his cracker box. In general, nobody paid any attention to him.

There was nothing strange about Sayres's gift for spitting straight. He had always been a simple, industrious toiler, with the narrowest of horizons.

Only twice in his life had he been as far away as Boston. A fisherman, he had been so successful that it used to be said of him when he came home with a full dory where nobody else had been rewarded by a nibble: "Ben's got a system. He says, 'If I was a cod, where'd I go today?' An' Ben goes there, an' drops his line!"

Now he lived alone in his little beach shack, raising garden truck and keeping a few hens; and having nothing to do in the winter but chew tobacco and spit, he spat surpassing well. Had wider fields opened to him in his prime, he probably would have been a success therein; for he had the gift of taking infinite pains. But none of his fellow townsmen ever considered that he amounted to much.

Snow's store, unimpressive in its disorder, did a surprising business. It drew from a large number of little hamlets without stores of their own, and each season brought its own special harvest of trade. There were many fishermen among its customers; mostly Portuguese, these days. The cranberry pickers came in the fall of the year. Later on there were duck hunters from the city. Summer boarders, not as numerous here as elsewhere on the Cape, were nevertheless a growing factor. In the spring there were boats to be put in commission, with resulting sales of paint, marine hardware, blocks and running gear, varnish and putty. Winter was the quiet season; and the receipts often lay in Snow's ancient safe for three weeks or more, until he felt in the mood to take the hard drive to Provincetown and bank them. The safe was an enormous one, with an oil sketch of a bark under full sail beneath the worn gold lettering: Enoch Snow and Son. It was hard to move, but easy to open. It would have passed unscathed through a fire or an earthquake; but a third-rate cracksman would have mastered it in five or ten minutes at the outside. At times there was as much as three thousand dollars behind its rusty iron doors.

The isolation of Brandford had been

a sure protection for generations. It was off the Cape highway; no strangers visited it. One or two drummers came monthly to Snow's store; the game warden and lighthouse inspector once or twice a year. Everybody knew everybody else. News traveled with the uncanny swiftness that is a characteristic of primitive communities, whether in the jungles of Africa, or on the long sandy reaches of Cape Cod. Orrin Bates, the duck hunter, was constable; and he had little to do. No felony had been committed within a generation; nothing more serious than a New Year's fight down in the east end where the Portuguese lived.

It was not until the Cape highway was completed that the automobile reached out and bracketed Brandford to the general scheme of progress and civilization. Where formerly it had taken a buckboard two hours of the hardest sort of going to get to the nearest railroad station, now a powerful motor brought Brandford within ten minutes of the highway, and an hour of flourishing inland cities. The natives knew this in theory; but as none of them owned a car, and no outsider used one to come to them, they did not realize any change.

When on a cold night in January two strangers entered Snow's at nine o'clock, the eight men sitting about the cannon-ball stove were stricken dumb and motionless by the unexpected. A stiff Nor'easter had prevented them from hearing the purr of the powerful engine in the roadster which had brought the intruders; they materialized like visitants from another world—which they were.

Handkerchiefs masked the lower parts of their faces. Beady eyes bored at the amazed little senate from beneath visored caps. Above all, short, ugly automatics menaced them.

"Stick 'em up, you yaps!" a harsh voice cried; and seven pairs of hands instantly did that which nobody present had ever seen done except once or twice on the screen when a picture was run off at the Village Hall.

II

SEVEN pairs; for old Ben Sayres sat with his back to the door, and gazed with astonished eyes at the frozen attitudes of his fellow men.

"Up with 'em, grandpa, or we'll rub you out!"

The speaker advanced threateningly upon the ancient one.

Then Orrin Bates spoke.

"He's deafer'n a post!" he said.

The stranger laughed, and kicked the cracker box from under Ben Sayres. The old man sprawled forward, and when he recovered, looked behind him with popping eyes. Then he too raised his skinny arms on high, his jaws still working automatically on his cud of black twist.

The two gunmen went about their affair in a businesslike way, and with no loss of time. While one of them held up the little circle of loungers, the other passed round behind the counter to the safe, laid his gun on the floor at his right side, and began to spin the dial of the big lock, listening to the click of its worn tumblers.

Ben Sayres missed nothing that was happening. For once he was on an equality with his fellows. Silence prevailed; not a word was spoken, not a throat cleared. In a sense, he had the advantage; for years of deafness had bred the habit of close observation. He did not understand lip-reading, although he could often make out single words or short phrases; but he was a keen judge of a man's emotions and intent from the expression of his face.

The hold-up man did not point his gun at any one in particular. To do this is bad psychology. It alarms the individual at whom the gun is aimed; but it breeds a dangerous confidence in the rest. With his eyes ceaselessly traveling from end to end of the circle, the yegg stood with gun pointed toward the floor directly in front of him, ready to train it instantly upon any sign of restlessness or threat of action.

It was easy enough to guess Snow's

feelings, Ben Sayres reflected. And he grinned at the terror in sexton Dennis' bulging eyes and gaping mouth. But Orrin Bates, the man at the end of the line, and nearest to the yegg, interested him most of all.

He knew Bates' thoughts as clearly as if they were his own. For as constable it was his duty, if anyone's, to do something to prevent the impending crime. No one could blame him for not doing anything; the situation was without any precedent in the peaceful, sleepy old tide-water town. But his failure would always rankle, as long as he might live. Sarcastic comment, bucolic pleasantries would follow him to his grave. And he knew it, and chafed under his helplessness.

He was, as has been said, a hunter. Of any wild creature whose flesh was fit to eat, or whose skin was marketable; but a duck shooter in particular. Many wild geese fell to his patient watching and deadly marksmanship. He got his quota of deer, when they were not protected by law; some foxes, plenty of rabbits and muskrat. He was a lean, bronzed, silent man of remarkable endurance, as quick as a bobcat, and capable of as many hours of motionless lying-in-wait. Ben Sayres noted that his eyes never left the yeggman's; and he knew that were the latter to permit his attention to be distracted for an instant, the lean hunter would be all over him in a flash.

It was not improbable that this very thing would happen. It is hard to remain tense and expectant, to keep the muscles under perfect control, the nerves calm and collected.

Sayres felt that any little noise; the cat jumping after a mouse in the lean-to at the end of the store; a sneeze; the bang of a shutter wrenched loose by the rising gale; might draw the fellow's eyes for a fraction of time—and he felt that of any of these contingencies Orrin Bates, who had no nerves at all, would take instant advantage. But he also knew that he was not enough of a fool to throw his life away uselessly. It would be mere suicide to leap in front

of that deadly thirty-two steel-jacketed angel of death!

His train of thought led naturally enough to speculation as to the possibility of creating some little distraction that should serve Bates' purpose. There was no one else he could rely on, in that anxious half circle of faces he knew so well, beneath the up-raised arms. But he could count on him! Despite his deafness, the character of each man present was an open book to the old fellow.

He wished that he could spit. It might be that excitement had stimulated salivation. At any rate, his mouth was uncomfortably full of tobacco juice. He was about ten feet distant from the stove—a trifle more, perhaps—but standing somewhat to one side. He could spit through its open door, even at this angle. He had often amused himself in the yard at home, or trudging along the wayside, by much more difficult feats of labial marksmanship than any of the store frequenters dreamed of. But he feared the nervous tension would cause the yegg to shoot him dead the instant his juice hissed on the red hot coals, and before he realized what it was. It would be safer to let it run down his chin. Or to swallow it!

The train of thought was leading old Ben as inevitably as a syllogism. The successive steps were not known to him, as such; but they were none the less present, a chain without a missing link. The watchful constable; the need of spitting; his ability to spit straight into the stove; the danger of thus attracting the yegg's attention to himself. It needed but the final and really inevitable suggestion to set him into action as certainly as a fulminate when brought into contact with inert dynamite creates an explosion that seems spontaneous, but is of course the inexorable result of natural cause.

Without consciousness of intent, or plan, Ben Sayres spat.

It shot through the hole once occupied by a perfectly good eye-tooth as straight and swift as a league pitcher's spit-ball. It struck the yegg full in the

face, just above his nose, at the very split-second that his eyes had passed from the old man to his nearest fellow victim. It filled both his eyes with a bitter brew of nicotine, licorice, and oil of peppermint; a mixture so potent that it enjoyed much local repute as a counter-irritant for hornet stings, snake bite, ivy poisoning and toothache. It blinded the yegg, who cried out involuntarily, his gun whipping up even as he recoiled a pace.

In that second of time Orrin Bates leaped in, both hands closing on his gun wrist as a steel trap closes on the luckless ground-hog. The weapon clattered to the floor.

Not another one, Ben Sayres noted, had moved. They were taken by surprise for the second time that night, unable to understand what it was that had happened,—when with a sudden twist the body of the yegg was sent sprawling into their very midst. Then they had to move; and hands that made up in roughness what they had lacked in initiative held and mauled him into submission.

Bates had retrieved the gun and fired before the other yegg really knew what had taken place. His hand was groping for his own gat when he rolled over with a .32 through his head. Bates had wasted no time in words, taken no chances of a duel. He had been caught off his guard once that night; and no living man had ever caught him twice running!

Long after the dead man had been laid on a bench in the cellar to await the arrival of the medical examiner from Provincetown, and his confederate locked up in the single cell which had lacked a tenant so long, the men sat around the cannon-ball stove excitedly talking, telling over and over again what they had thought and felt, and what they had meant to do, if Ben Sayres hadn't done it first.

They looked at him, and grinned, and said things about him that he could not hear behind his wall of silence. In rough kindness, they occasionally scrawled some rude eulogy on a scrap

of Snow's wrapping paper, and passed it to him to read. And he grinned back, and chewed steadily, and from time to time spat unerringly into the hot vitals of the cannon-ball stove, without hitting the edges of the opening, or spilling a drop on the wide-planked floor!



Oh, Walk in Pride No Longer!

By A. Newberry Choyce

HE shall come in the quiet
And when the night is still
With the little lash of a new moon
To whip you to his will.

And drive you dark and dawning
Nor ever give you rest,
Nor ever quench or quiet
The burning in your breast.

And when your heart is beating
Against the crimson bars,
And when you wear his shackles
Of silences and stars. . . .

Oh, walk in pride no longer!
Oh, scoff at Love no more!
Lest rue and never roses
Should be about your door.



THE attentions of the man she loves never please a girl half so much as the attentions of the man some other girl loves.



The Death of the Reverend Mr. Mason

By Clarence Roeser

I

THE Reverend Mr. Mason is dead. The undertaker is notified. The blood is drained out of the deceased after the fashion of preparing a freshly killed hog, and a dark, nasty green fluid is pumped in. The undertaker works rapidly, stopping only to tell a story to a friend of his wife's first husband and the hearse driver, who watch the process.

II

THE Reverend Mr. Mason, with tallow face and eyes too tightly closed, with his hair plastered with the part in the middle, though it was always on the side in life, is dropped into a narrow black box. His arms are folded across his breast, hopelessly, but con-

veniently for the undertaker, for now the casket may be shut with ease.

III

THE Reverend Mr. Mason is stared at by weeping friends and peeping neighbors. It is time for the service. A eulogy by a squawkish Methodist minister likens the deceased to Job, Socrates, and John Wesley.

IV

THE Reverend Mr. Mason is jolted out to Forest Lawn. He is put to sleep with a shovel.

V

THE Reverend Mr. Mason is forgotten.



THE reason there are so many bachelors is because too many of them associate with married men.



NO woman can possibly live up to her adjectives.



The Higher Learning in America

I

Princeton University

By John Peale Bishop

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY was founded in 1746 as a Presbyterian college and is now one of the most desired and desirable places in America in which to loiter through four years of one's youth. This establishment of a place whence good Calvinists should go forth—laymen if need be, divines if possible—was, from the first, doomed to failure. Calvinism requires a clear and mountainous air; Princeton is set near slow streams and the air is always either softly damp or suave with sunlight. Although the trustees desperately made Jonathan Edwards president of the college, he could do nothing against the indulgent climate. It is evident that the cause was early lost, for the younger Aaron Burr, the first graduate to rise to distinction, destroyed a village virgin at sixteen and shot Alexander Hamilton when a little more mature. I drag in these somewhat doubtful details because it is my conviction that the University of Princeton is what it is largely on account of its site. Had it been left to Elizabeth(town), New Jersey, and named, as was originally intended, for Governor Belcher, its history and character might be quite otherwise.

This quiet, leafy New Jersey town, continuously troubled by the sound of bells, still keeps a sense of its past. In Nassau Hall the Continental Congress sat in threatened assembly, and behind the second-hand furniture shops of Witherspoon Street are the graves of a half dozen Signers. All but the most

indifferent students are aware that a barren acre of cornland to the east of the town is the battlefield of Princeton. It is the privilege of certain towns to mumble over their past. Edinburgh, for example, wears its age proudly and obviously; little of London, except to the bearers of Baedekers, seems older than the Crystal Palace or the Albert Memorial.

Princeton is older than the rocks upon which it sits, perhaps because it needs but four years to establish a precedent in antiquity, so that, since the middle of the eighteenth century, forty generations of youths, each with its stiff customs and cries of revolt, have passed through the town on their way to middle age and mediocrity.

Tom D'Invilliers, the poetic feeder to the epigrammatic hero of "This Side of Paradise," was aware of this when, with Amory Blaine, he crossed the campus on their last night before leaving for the war: "What we leave is more than this one class; it's the whole heritage of youth. We're just one generation—we are breaking all the links that seemed to bind us to top-booted and high-stocked generations. We've walked arm and arm with Burr and Light Horse Harry Lee through half these deep blue nights."

The campus accepts this tradition and attempts an air of even greater age by borrowing an architecture of Oxonian medievalism. It is the fashion just now among intellectuals to decry this

imitation of the English collegiate Gothic. But the only enduring form of American architecture is the ferro-concrete skyscraper, which in such a village would be ridiculous. Colonial Georgian is American only by virtue of its early importation. Besides, it has already been used in its two adaptable forms at Harvard and the University of Virginia. No, I am unfortunately fond of the grave beauty of these towers and spires trembling upward, intricately labored and gray; of these gray quadrangles and deep slate roofs, at night hooding under dormer windows' solitary lights, the slate only less luminous and blue than the sky uplifted above it; of these Seven-Nine stately in red brick and Holder enclosing with cloisters and arches a square of sunlight and sod. . . .

Here it is possible that the student should believe himself in a rich current of life. Here no dreamer in his ivory tower, no drunkard, driveling and about to pass out under the table, is farther removed from actuality than the sophomore sunning his white-flanneled legs in front of the soda shops on Nassau Street. The trains that pass three miles away, plying between New York and Philadelphia, loaded with bankers, clergymen, fertilizer agents, Italian immigrants and cigar drummers, are only so many swift blurs trailing a long foam of smoky cloud across a wash of summer green. Life outside exists—for week-ends and eventually for more troublesome purposes—but there is no immediate reason to bother about it. After four years the undergraduate becomes so studiously lackadaisical, so imperturbably serene, that a young Princeton alumnus looks little better to him than a bank president or a United States senator.

For during these four years he will have heard an affirmation of the older aristocratic tradition—such as it was—of the Middle States, that barbarous gentility, that insistence on honor and physical courage, which America as a whole scarcely preserved after the eighteenth century. He will have found life

more nicely adjusted than he is likely to find it again in his youth, and he will have had leisure in which to adjust himself after the turbulence of adolescence. During these years he will, according to his measure, acquire a more gracious conduct: the puritan will be forced toward tolerance, the philistine will become less raucous. And some will find the pathetic beauty of the wisdom of dead men and come with the fervor of contemporary discovery upon the books of those who have written beautifully of themselves.

Cut off from the present, it is possible to stare with a wild surmise at the past. In New York and Chicago, Dr. Johnson must remain a rather shadowy corpulence, ghostily closeted in bookstores. In Princeton his too solid flesh becomes as substantial as Mr. Chesterton's. Even Tiberius descends from the monstrous and tragic cloud in which Tacitus has enveloped him and dwindles to a studious and able administrator quite as credible as, say, the Honorable Josephus Daniels. Dante may be found at the end of a dreary term in Italian. And the young Swinburne, flamboyant and incarnate, with tossing red hair and wobbly knees, emerges from the Chancellor Green Library with the 1866 volume in his tiny hands.

The campus, already aloof, becomes the more circumscribed because of a lack of girls in Princeton. There are some few, but they are hedged about, or wear flat-heeled shoes, or serve epigrams with cucumber sandwiches, or—but enough. Of course, every once in a while some unwary student returns from vacation sad-eyed and engaged, and, in my generation, there was likewise a society known as the Grouching Club, from whose adventures Fitzgerald drew heavily in his thesis on petting. But in ordinary times the ordinary student contents himself as best he can with masculine society and regards proms and houseparties as something of a nuisance.

Trenton is near by, but bad form. Except for a few indiscriminating freshmen, who ride by trolley on Sat-

urday nights to dance with rouged, but chaste, shopgirls, the place does not exist. New York and Philadelphia are possible, both socially and by reason of the Pennsylvania Railroad. One mournful professor recently told me that everyone spent the week-end in Princeton except the students. Certainly these absences are more frequent than before Prohibition, when the Saturday night drinking parties at the Nass afforded passable amusement. Then, at least, week-ends were not talked about, whether one went to Philadelphia for the Assembly or to New York for more ribald amusement.

II

WHAT shall be said of the Princeton social system and the upperclass clubs of which so many bitter and uninteresting things have been said already? The clubs have been called undemocratic, as if a goose-step method should be applied to choosing one's friends. They have been assailed as snobbish, when many a poor but honest student has found that neither poverty nor honesty could keep visitations of upperclassmen and election committees from his door. It has been said that they accustom the undergraduate to a too luxurious manner of living. Even this is, I am afraid, a fiction, for, if the architecture is at times pretentious, the food is unfortunately simple and wholesome—and it is to be remembered that the clubs are, first and last, eating clubs.

No, the trouble with the clubs is that once in them they matter so little, after having seemed to matter so much. During the first two years even quite sane students look upon these formidable buildings on Prospect Street as having the awesomeness of the College of Cardinals and as bearing the hereditary privileges of the stalls of the Knights of the Garter. The President of Ivy—the most ancient of the clubs—is regarded more enviously than the President of the University, the Captain of the football team, the Governor of the

State or the Prince of Wales. But once the elections are over, it is difficult for even the election committees to maintain their fervor.

These elections are held in the spring term of sophomore year, usually the first week in March. Invitations are sent out to a limited number of sophomores, who move among their own class, sounding out their friends and desirable acquaintances. A day or so later the bicker begins, and committees of upperclassmen from each club are free to approach the sophomores. The campus takes on an air of Old Home Week in a faintly alcoholic Bedlam. Juniors and seniors harass and harangue the amorphous sections; names are brought up to be black-balled or passed. Eventually—no one ever knows quite how—the sections are formed and signed up. The delirium ends, and the sophomore starts self-consciously to cultivate these bosom friends of a week's standing or, in loneliness and it may be with heartburnings, broods over his failure to realize himself.

Many an arrival at this season has based his success on brillantine and a gift for silence. For at times it seems as if nothing matters much but that a man bear an agreeable person and maintain with slightly mature modifications the standards of prep school. Any extreme in habiliment, pleasures or opinions is apt to be characterized as "running it out," and to "run it out" is to lose all chance of social distinction. Talking too loudly at Commons, an undue concern over the souls of unconverted Chinese, drinking more liquor than can be held quietly and steadily, dressing too dowdily or too flamboyantly, the display of more money than necessary for maintenance on a plane with one's peers—all these are "running it out" and wooing damnation. I knew one able youth who barely got into a club on the ninth ballot because his legs were bowed so that he walked like a sailor in a heavy gale. Another sank far below his hopes after boasting too loudly and complacently of his goings-on in New York. Still another failed

altogether because he wore pale yellow shirts and was near-sighted.

These somewhat naïve standards may be violated on occasion by the politician or the big man, but to the mere individualist they will be applied with contempt and intolerance. There are certain activities—all of them extra-curriculum—which have a recognized social value, though what a man does counts rather less at Princeton than elsewhere, certainly less than at Yale. Most influential are those sports which play to large crowds—football, baseball, track and crew. Closet athletics, such as wrestling and the parallel bars, are almost a disadvantage.

Outside of athletics, the most powerful organization is the Triangle Club, an unwieldy and smart assemblage, which each year tours a dozen cities, presenting a musical comedy written, book and music, by the undergraduates on a lively but slightly antiquated model. The English Dramatic Association, with a record of Elizabethan Comedies, Molière and Shaw, is looked on askance, and the more recent *Théâtre Intime* regarded as a little queer.

Of the publications, *The Daily Princetonian* is received, journalism being, as readers of the *New York Times* knows, a highly reputable pursuit. The *Nassau Literary Magazine* suffers from its pretentious title, although literature is admitted in the curriculum. The Philadelphian Society, which is only the Y. M. C. A. in a Brooks suit, is socially and politically powerful. There is more to be said on this subject, but this should be enough to give a hint of the undergraduate's mind at the midpoint of his career.

Yet I do not wish to cry down the clubs. They are pleasant enough places in which to loll over a second cigarette at breakfast with the sun striping the cloth and the bell for your nine-ten class, which you are quite conscious you are cutting, ringing outside. And dinner is crowded but intimate, with amiable kidding from the professional jesters and all the amenities of youth

save wine. After dinner the idlers saunter toward the movies, and a few will, for an hour, lean across the fire or, in warmer weather, stare wistfully into the blue emptiness of evening as if youth were immutable and time had stopped. If the judgments on which the elections are based are immature, it is that the sophomores are themselves immature, the average age being but nineteen. The periodical revolts are raised not, as the leaders suppose, against the clubs, but against the intolerance of the young and youth's contempt for all that do not walk after their own way, whether because of some austerity of soul or weak ankles.

Once the division into clubs is made, it is largely ignored. Many of the idols of sophomore year are discovered to have not only clay feet but clay heads as well. The Secretary of the Triangle Club fails to be elected president; the promising athlete becomes ineligible. And a new valuation begins, based more on the individual and less on powerful friends. In the meanwhile the junior has probably discovered that Princeton is a university and gives himself, somewhat belatedly, to such education as may be had in the two years that remain.

For it is unfortunately true that the first two years are spent on studies so general and elementary that they might well have been completed in preparatory school. Despite the fact that the entrance requirements of Princeton are as high as those of any university in the country, the average boy at entrance is little better than literate.

This is not the place to go into the defects of our educational system, but it is idle to rail at the universities for their lack of accomplishment while the average American boy of eighteen remains so hopelessly untrained and uninformed. The sole pretence of the preparatory schools seems to be (1) that they prepare their charges for college entrance exams, which is true and the beginning of their inadequacy, and (2) that they build character, which means that they uphold a sweet and serious ideal deriving somewhat from

Tennyson's death-mask of the Victorian Prince Consort and somewhat from the most unselfish of the Boy Scouts. But I don't know that anything can be done about it, so long as we keep up a pretence of universal education.

At the beginning of junior year the student is free to choose a department in which henceforth he concentrates his energies. History and Economics gather the fairest crowds, with English and the Romance languages holding those who hope for an easy two years or who believe that Princeton can best be appreciated by following beautiful letters. Science, mathematics and the ancient languages keep only small and serious groups.

During these last two years the ends of education are directed toward upholding the humanities and establishing a more intimate relation between student and instructor. This last is done chiefly through the preceptorials, small and conversational groups, which supplement the more formal lectures. The aim of the faculty now becomes, in theory at least, the inculcation of that form of education so abhorred by H. G. Wells, for Princeton does not attempt to make good citizens, but to create a respect for ideas and to make the student aware how intolerably men have suffered that beauty and wisdom might have form. Education is conceived as being quite as useless as a drawing by Da Vinci, and as having nothing to do with training a man to vote intelligently for Democratic congressmen, or to become a more earnest member of the Christian Endeavor Society. There is a certain amount of social service hocus-pocus extant on the campus, and occasionally revivalists appear with theatrical gestures and voices like Dunsany gods, but they do little harm and represent a compromise rather than an aim.

These things are goodly and well enough for the average undergraduate, but the exceptional boy will not come off so happily. If he does not flunk out—which he is more than likely to do through indifference or boredom—he

will waste most of his time, unless he discovers a more intimate relation with the faculty than the classroom allows, or contemptuously devotes himself to reading outside his courses.

III

My first view of the Princeton faculty was in the autumn of 1913. I had been herded along with some four hundred other freshmen into the seats of Marquand Chapel—a hideous brown stone building, recently burned, to the rich delight of all those who care more for Christian architecture than for Christian instruction. My legs were lost in bulky corduroy trousers; my somewhat skimpy shoulders were evident under a tight black jersey. A black skull cap (the sole remaining vestige of this once compulsory uniform) fidgetted between my knees.

An old man, rosy as a stained glass prophet and only a little less severe, flapped by in a gown of black.

"That's St. Peter, the sexton," whispered an informed freshman.

The organ began—an orgulous roll—and the academic procession passed slowly down the aisle beside me: gowns of voluminous black, hooded with orange, sapphire and crimson; the pale robes of the Doctors of Oxford and Cambridge, the rich, proud reds of the Academie Française; mortar boards and beef-eater caps of crushed velvet, brilliant or black.

Presently they were seated in semi-lunar tiers in the chancel, and a speech began, tactful with platitudes. But I did not hear it. I was intent on the aspect of these grave, serene and reverend scholars: philosophers grown old in the pursuit of Truth, mathematicians entranced by the dizzying splendor of numbers, humanists who dined nightly with Lucretius, Erasmus, Pico della Mirandola and Sir Thomas More. I came out of the chapel still dazed by the sight of these noble creatures and was told to run home by bawdy sophomores eager for horsing.

Have I given you, gentle and credu-

lous reader, a true impression of the Princeton faculty? The question is obviously rhetorical. I have not. I have looked on many academic processions since that day and have never been able to see more than a number of bored, elderly gents, tricked out in cotton wrappers, black with an occasional gaudy streamer or color, worn over their everyday Kuppenheimers.

But if the faculty is not, as I supposed in my credulous eagerness, a noble body of rapt scholars, neither is it exclusively composed of the kind of professors made famous by their own published platitudes and the satires of intelligent critics. Most of them are old boys with a weakness for pedantry. They play golf in knickerbockers and are not more than ordinarily absent-minded. If they are in their craft disinclined to face facts, their conversation is more full of good sense than is the average business man's of their years. They lead indeed a cloistered life, and many of them are as chaste as the very gargoyles on their scholastic cells. They are jealous of their privileges and regard a doctor's thesis as the only substitute for an initiatory vow in their cult. But they are not moralists using the arrows of Apollo to point a Sunday text. If they deplore the text of Petronius Arbiter, it is not because of the horrible decay of Roman morals, but because of the decadence of Neronian Latin and the mutilations of the manuscript.

There are, of course, this being America, moral enthusiasts and pallid respectabilities who deplore the vagabondage, the thyrsus-twirling and harlot-hunting of the poets they pore over, and who would be mightily disturbed "should their Catullus come their way." I have not forgotten that lecture where an hour was spent trying to bring the late Percy Bysshe Shelley safely into the Anglican Church. But neither have I forgotten that the wisest of the English faculty are as anxious that the student escape the dominance of the Victorian tradition as Mr. Ezra Pound might be in their place.

For beyond the pedants and the prudes there are still a few wise and gracious individuals, who are more than pedagogues and—on occasion—less than scholars. They do not write moral essays for the *Atlantic Monthly*, nor contribute to the Sunday edition of the *New York Times*, having little in common with the box-office hokum professor, that crabbed and senile androgyne who rushes weekly into print to uphold his little store of dogma and to deplore with recent sorrow the death of Elizabeth Browning and Thomas Carlyle. Neither are they erudite non-intelligences, chattering over marginalia, useless phantoms in a noisy and passionate world. They are, rather, quiet-mannered gentlemen, urbane and skeptical, content to uphold the dignity of the scholar in an age without dignity and crassly uneducated. Sometimes I feel that they are all that is permanent in Princeton, when I return and find that all the men who were young with me are gone. Much of the grave charm of the place is due them, and I had rather the elms of McCosh Walk were cut down and burned away than that a single one of them should move from his chair.

* * *

After four years at Princeton, what remains beyond a piece of black-printed parchment, waxed and tabbed with a colored string? What beyond the recollection of Sage Tower, misty and strange, standing like a gray alchemist over October's gold; of the days of the big games, with broad orange banners over the towers and the gay, opulent, easy-going crowds come down in motors or by train; of my own small room in Witherspoon with books, dingily red and brown, or with golden blazonries, and the portrait of Georg Gyze, wistfully serene; of rolling marbles down the declining floor to bump against a lecturer who had droned over-long; of examination rooms, intense, hot and cigaretteless. What beyond the recollection of torchlight processions, the "whoop 'er up" song, and the gargoyles

creeping out into the crimson glare; of drunken students drilling imaginary squads under midnight windows; of the mid-year prom and the gymnasium diaphanous in streamers of apple green and pink; of arriving drunk at the Phi Beta Kappa dinner and passing out before the roast; of students leaving a little sorrowfully and without illusion for the war, after farewell parties which began on Perrier Jouet '93 and ended on Great Western; of Holder Court under a decreescent moon, softened by snow as by age, startled by the sudden sound of revelling footsteps under the arches?

other such recollections? Well, not much, to be frank: a few friends whom time has proved, men with whom I have shared many things and who are after my own kind; a few books I should not otherwise have read; a smattering of Italian and the ability to pronounce Middle English passably well. But it is enough. If I had a son who was an ordinarily healthy, not too intelligent youth I should certainly send him to Princeton. But if ever I find myself the father of an extraordinary youth I shall not send him to college at all. I shall lock him up in a library until he is old enough to go to Paris.

*(The second article in this series will be "Yale," by Donald Ogden Stewart
It will appear in the next number of the Smart Set.)*



Wonder

By Jeannette Marks

WHEN stars go past my window in the night
Traveling from east to west,
I see no angels in their flight
Nor dreams of rest.

I run with you along the pastured skies,
Here pass a plume of fire,
There cut the silver of the dawn
With our desire.

Onward we race unto the verge of things
Where footsteps cease to be,
Where joy hangs singing on the wind
Eternally.

There, hand folded in hand, we watch our love,—
A leaf, a song, a star
Whirling in flight, set free, follow
Wonder afar!



Tales

By Lila Sanberg

THE Lord's Anointed were talking in the Feasting Hall.

"I did not carry on with her," said Joseph, "because of the abominable habit she had of eating fried alligator and onions with every meal."

"My brother said my face shone with the Splendor of God, twenty-four hours a day," Abel said. "He called me a damned Methodist and slew me."

"That Sheba was a *Kopf* I do not deny," Solomon said, "but there is a limit to ugliness which no woman should decently exceed. I gave her the dandlewood, the precious stones and the old spices to hasten her departure."

"Brethren," said Noah, "I rejoiced when I saw the olive-leaf. Another day with my wife and I should have most certainly sunk the ship."



Finis

By May S. Greenwood

*YOUR love as irised dawn came silently,
But like the sunset's torch of singing flame
Awakes your memory.*



PARTNERS in misery: the wife of a dullard and the husband of a witty woman.



Mr. Worthington's Black Eye

By Ford Douglas

I

MAY WORTHINGTON had reached that stage of discontent when she found herself at times wondering why she had married. It was now ten o'clock in the morning, and seated at her bedroom window she contemplated with a frown the plain gold ring on the third finger of her left hand. A little clock on the dresser, a wedding present, ticked noisily and she repressed an inclination to dash it to the floor. "Why?" she queried aloud. "Why did I?"

She sought in vain for an answer, and, angered somewhat at her inability to placate herself, she reviewed her marital career of less than a year. For a month or more she had been doing this, and the results of these moments of concentration were, as now, nothing.

"Well," she sighed, "I guess it was Destiny."

Though she had only a vague idea as to the meaning of the word, the thought comforted her. It smacked of fatalism, the occult, the doctrine of what-is-to-be-will-be, and so it all being fore-ordained and arranged for her in advance, she shrugged her shoulders and again surrendered to the inevitable.

Now, as a matter of fact there was no mystery as to the cause of her marriage. The plain truth was that she had snatched Edgar Worthington away from her best friend for the simple reason that her best friend had wanted him for herself. Though this was the root of the matter, to be fair, there were contributing causes.

The most important of these was that Worthington was considered an

"eligible." He was an imported article. He came from Boston, and, moreover, was related to a family of social prominence, horse show people with their pictures in the Sunday papers. With this to live up to, Edgar Worthington was eminently respectable—offensively respectable, so certain crime-stained members of the golf club thought. He was a lily of the field, a shining example with which nagging wives infuriated their husbands.

For a time Worthington's pulchritude had been a source of pride to his wife. She had a habit of speaking of it, very casually, to less favored matrons, and then it began to pall on her. Edgar was always the same. His Boston mind functioned with clock-like precision and he came and went with the utmost regularity.

Six months of this made May Worthington a thoughtful woman, and then one night at a dinner, after a second cocktail, she confided to a woman friend that she wished that "Edgar had a little more devil in him." She regretted this the next day, and calling her friend up begged her to forget it, but as the young matron had been at the moment carrying on a flirtation with a good-looking young "eye, ear and nose specialist" across the table she could not even remember the incident.

Back of May's unrest on this particular morning was an irritating moment shortly after breakfast. The ice man had been impudent. It appears, to delete some thousands of words of dialogue and explanation, that the milk bottles were in the wrong compartment. An ice man has rights, and one of them

is that the ice chamber must be free and clear for the proper dispatch of his business, and on this morning Finnigan, finding the box littered with milk bottles, had grumbled and muttered something under his breath. Then Mrs. Worthington called her husband.

Now, Mike Finnigan was six feet three inches tall and weighed two hundred and seventy pounds. Viewed from the rear he resembled nothing so much as a grizzly bear garbed in blue denim, and so when Edgar glanced at the wide shoulders and saw the chest that protruded from a rent in the bosom of Mr. Finnigan's shirt he handed him—a cigar. It was a sensible thing to do, yet somehow May Worthington was disappointed. Of pioneer stock, Mrs. Worthington had her own ideas as to how the affair should have been handled. The least, she thought, her knight should have done was to administer a scathing rebuke. But he had failed her.

All this rankled, and as she looked again at the plain gold ring she voiced once more her conviction: "It's Destiny!" This done, she rose from her chair to telephone some invitations for an afternoon of bridge.

Women, fortunately, have these queer solaces. The true philosopher, however, knows there is no such thing as destiny; that life is a series of accidental happenings that, taken together, constitute an episode, as the scenario writers have it. This being true, certain incidents had happened that morning, and were to happen, that were to make the day long remembered in the Worthington family.

The first link in the chain, for example, was the fact that Finnigan had fought a quart of gin in the Holtzenheimer icebox. Now, it is both a well-known and a scientific fact that an ice man loves gin. He will travel miles for it, and for even a promise of it he becomes a prince of liberality, being known to cram as much as three hundred pounds of ice into a fifty-pound box. It is a popular fallacy that the true gin-lover is the colored man. Stu-

dents and statisticians know that the juice of the juniper is more highly regarded by ice men than by any other race or calling, a fact that will be corroborated by those who have kept gin in refrigerators.

The second link in the chain was the fact that the Holtzenheimer gin was only a vile imitation, a synthetic variety made up of alcohol, glycerine and turpentine. Now, while real gin transforms an ice man into a friend and a brother, the imitation kind has the opposite effect. So, to take up the incidents one by one as they happened and to show them with the clarity demanded by photoplay producers, it was the big hooch of evil gin that caused Mike Finnigan to grumble in the course of his business call at the Worthington home.

Other things were happening, and about to happen, downtown.

II

MR. WORTHINGTON shared with a lawyer a small office in the old Grimes Building. This rookery, once tenanted by most of the prominent gladiators of the law, had seen better days, but as Worthington had little to do now but tend to his wife's real estate it suited all requirements. Here, most of the time, Mr. Worthington sat in solitary state, awaiting answers to the neat lettering under his name on the door—"Investments."

At the precise moment when his wife had surrendered to her fatalistic whim, Edgar Worthington raised his eyes from the paper on his desk and emitted a discreet gasp. He had been occupying his time by subdividing some of his wife's suburban property into city lots, a pleasing and frequent diversion, but now he laid aside his pencil and ruler and all thought of the matter vanished from his mind. For, at a distance of twenty-four feet and six inches by surveyor's tape from his window lay an almost nude young woman—a sight to stir the blood of even a Bostonian.

Worthington had known in a general way that the building opposite his win-

dow was a hotel, but more than that the St. Nicholas had not engaged his attention. It was a shabby old hostelry of dismal rooms with high ceilings and morgue-like marble fireplaces. A generation before it had been a place of ostentation and grandeur, sheltering at various times such important personages as Patti, General Grant and Jay Gould, but in recent years it had become the abode of actor folk of the vaudeville circuits and the burlesque wheels. And so, naturally enough, Mazie McSweeney, known professionally as "Zorella, Queen of the Slack Wire," in the due course of events became a guest and was assigned to a bathless room on the fifth floor.

It was a hot night when Mazie and her partner registered, and late. Two suitcases and a dog constituted their possessions and after the bags were thrown into a corner it did not take them long to retire. There were twin beds in the room and Mazie, after a careless glance out into a night of stygian darkness, pushed one of the beds as close to the window as she could get it, rolled wearily over on it and was almost instantly asleep.

It is the habit of members of the theatrical profession to sleep late. It eliminates breakfast and annoys the hotel management, and so is, of course, the universal custom.

In this practice Mazie was no exception. She usually rose at noon, and now, ten o'clock in the morning, she lay at her window in dreamless slumber. The slack wire artist was young, blonde and beautiful. There was no doubt as to this last, for Mazie was fair with a great mass of flaxen hair and a skin of milky whiteness, a rare thing with the usually freckled Irish. Clad in but a single silken garment, she lay with her head upon an alabaster shoulder, and it was this picture, framed as it were by the broad window casing, that quickened the Bostonian pulse of Edgar Worthington.

Ordinarily women did not interest Mr. Worthington, but now he got out of his chair and, walking to his win-

dow, stood staring through the pane. There was dust on the glass and he raised the sash. For a time he contemplated the vision, and, subconsciously almost, compared the actress's slim loveliness with his wife's chubby plainness. Never before had he been so annoyed by his nearsightedness, and after batting his eyes for some moments to overcome this he took a firm hold on the window sill and leaned far out.

Now, in this exposé of fatalism and to demonstrate that any episode is but the result of divers incidents and accidents, it is necessary to state that the room immediately above that occupied by Mr. Worthington was the business office of Charley Clark, General (and only) Sales Agent for the Little Giant Can-Opener.

It may also be wise to hint that there was a vast difference in the physical, mental, moral and temperamental characteristics of the two men. Mr. Worthington was a roly-poly little man, rather slow-witted, eminently respectable and with no great imagination. Mr. Clark, on the other hand, was a slender youth of the hotel lobby type, quick in mental process, absolutely devoid of even a vestige of morals, and believing himself a Napoleon of can-openers—and women.

The Hotel St. Nicholas interested Mr. Clark vastly. From his desk chair he could gaze into the fifty windows of as many rooms, thus being able to pick and choose, as it were, the object of his flirtations. Nothing could have suited the sales agent better. He had, in fact, with the aid of his imagination, a harem open to his inspection at all times. Needless to say, and somewhat to the neglect of the can-opener business, he made a close study of his neighbors and eventually came to know most of them, at least by sight. For instance, there was the burlesque queen in the corner room on the fourth floor. In street garb, or even in negligée, she looked well enough, but in the early morning hours, Clark learned, she would hardly bear inspection. Too thick she was, he thought, at the waist, and besides she

had a number of moles on her back. A bobbed-hair ingénue on the fifth floor was more to his taste and he frequently waved at her from his window, holding aloft his desk 'phone and signaling his number with his fingers. But she never called him up, to his disgust, though she did occasionally grin at his antics.

At ten o'clock Clark entered his office, and, as was his habit, walked to the window to give the St. Nicholas the once-over before starting the labors of the day. A single glance banished all thought of business, for, on the floor below the level of his own and immediately opposite, there was exposed to his view the shapely figure of Mazie McSweeney.

Clark stared, grinning rapturously. Never had he in all the months of his scrutiny gazed upon such a vision. The girl—she was very young—was beautiful and, he thought, intelligent looking, thus being able, no doubt, to appreciate his charm of personality. So he inserted two fingers into his mouth and blew a loud, shrill whistle.

The queen of the slack wire stirred in her slumber and, encouraged at this, Clark megaphoned his hands and shouted a salutation, to wit:

"Oh, you baby doll! Look up here!"

This bellowing awakened her and glancing up she saw the wildly gesticulating salesman. Instantly she pulled a sheet about her and with an angry exclamation to someone in the room, got up from the bed and vanished from view.

Clark continued to stare, and then, to his dismay, saw another approach the window—a man—and with a celerity acquired by long practice he whirled back to his desk and put on the appearance of a man deeply immersed in business.

Mr. Worthington's brain, however, was not trained to act in such emergencies. Unaware of the potentialities of the situation, he continued to lean out of his window, puzzled at the singular disappearance of the flaxen hair and alabaster shoulders. He had heard the

whistle and hail, coming from somewhere, but did not connect it with the vision in the window opposite. So when a man appeared and stared across at him, Worthington stared back.

The masculine person was not a cheerful-looking individual. He was as unlovely as Mazie was beautiful, and, moreover, he had a pair of shoulders that filled the window from sash to sash. In vaudeville he was billed as "Sagasta, the Spanish Samson,"—and he happened to be Mazie's husband.

After a long and, Worthington afterward recalled, somewhat sinister scrutiny of him, the possessor of the bulging shoulders pulled down the curtain and Worthington went back to his desk and the business of subdividing his wife's suburban real estate. He made but little progress, for now somehow the matter of front feet, sidewalks and sewage had become flat and uninteresting and as he penciled off the lines he made many mistakes. After ten minutes of this, with an irritation that was unusual with him, he tore up the paper and was in the act of throwing it in the wastebasket when the door opened and a man crowded through.

The stranger was a giant of a man and of such breadth of shoulders that he had to turn slightly sidewise to enter the room. This person was none other than Sagasta, appearing, as movie stars sometimes announce, "himself, in person."

"You are the guy I am looking for," he said crisply. And then, without further remark, he smote Mr. Worthington to the floor. This done, he turned on his heel and left the office, closing the door softly behind him.

III

CAUTIOUSLY perceiving that his remarkable visitor had departed, Mr. Worthington rolled out from under the desk. He was a trifle dazed, yet at the same time anxiety filled his mind.

A number of thoughts came to him. He wondered if his impetuous caller would return. To prevent such a catas-

trophe he started to lock the door, pausing a moment to glance into the mirror over the washbowl in the corner of the room, and then, horror-stricken, he stood gazing at the apparition he saw there.

The skin surrounding his left eye was of a dirty yellowish tinge, fast turning black.

The enormity of the stranger's offense appalled him. It was almost incredible that he—a Worthington, a Harvard graduate, a squash player, and a third cousin of J. Marlborough Flack—should suffer such an indignity. What would the public think? What would his wife think? He was considering these problems when Mr. Jenkins entered.

"Great Lord!" ejaculated the lawyer. "How did you get it?"

This query was to be the first of several thousand.

Worthington's office mate was, unfortunately, a fight fan. He attended all the contests, and fistiana interested him vastly more than the dreary tomes of the law. He could tell you the fighting weights of Spider Cohen or Tug Levinski without a moment's hesitation; consequently he made eager inquiry, mainly of a technical nature. He wanted to know if the blow was a hook, a jab, a punch or a swing, all of which was Greek to Mr. Worthington, and, moreover, irritating. It was now noon, and further questioning being fruitless, Jenkins got his hat and departed to spread the news abroad.

Left alone, Mr. Worthington sat at his desk and pondered. From an almost incredulous astonishment that such a calamity could come to him, a state of mind that made him consult the glass more than once, he came to the conclusion to consider the matter as an actuality and with all the calmness he could muster. Obviously it was a situation that called for advice, so, after thinking over all his acquaintances who might counsel him, he desperately concluded to call up a certain member of the golf club, one Bob Harper. His acquaintance with Harper was but the

slightest, yet the emergency was compelling.

Great, then, was Mr. Harper's astonishment when he heard Worthington's voice over the wire.

"What's that?" queried Harper. "Say it over slow."

"I have a friend who has a black eye," repeated Worthington. "What is the proper remedy?"

"There ain't no remedy," answered Harper promptly. "Tell your friend to hide out for a couple of weeks—fishin' or somethin'. 'Cause nothin' ever cured a black eye but time."

Mr. Harper spoke with authority. He had suffered a score or more of darkened orbs, beginning with those administered by a long line of bartenders and hack drivers in the good old days, and followed, in the later gasoline period, by a number inflicted by taxi drivers.

"But my friend can't go away—"

"Say," interrupted Harper, "cut out that 'friend' stuff. It's *you* that's got the eye, so quit stalling. And another thing: there's no alibi for a black lamp. You'd better tell the truth the first time and be done with it."

Mr. Worthington slammed the receiver back onto the hook. He recalled that he had never liked Harper, and certainly his acquaintance with the fellow had not warranted such brutality. He resolved never to speak to him again.

During the noon hour Jenkins had made a full report of the case, or as much as he had been able to learn, to his crowd at the University Club. They were an owlish lot, the club boys, running largely to horn-rimmed spectacles, and several of them gave him sure cures for what ailed Worthington. The custodian now of the recipes and nostrums hurried back to the office.

Afire with his discoveries, he burst in upon the wretched Bostonian, who, apprehensive of another visit from the strong man, sprang from his chair in alarm.

"Beef is the thing!" declared Jenkins. "A slice of raw beef bound over the

eye will take out the swelling and discoloration."

"How long must the application remain?" inquired Worthington anxiously.

"Well, I should say a couple of days ought to make you look like new," cheered Jenkins. "Three days at most, and—"

"I've got to be home at five," interrupted Worthington, "and I've got to look perfectly natural."

This unexpected eventuality was met by Jenkins's suggestion that he have the eye painted.

"Painted?" queried Worthington. "What do you mean?"

"Simplest thing in the world—have it 'made up'—you know, like show people do with grease paints and things. Freddie Evers said his cousin did it one time when he had to go to a ball, and—"

"Who paints eyes?" demanded Worthington.

"Well, Freddie said that his cousin had it done in a barber shop. We might telephone to one of them and make an appointment."

Worthington seized upon the suggestion eagerly. But, alas! after several shops had been called up it appeared that the restoration of black eyes had become a lost art.

Jenkins, however, did not lose heart. When Sam Jenkins set out to do a thing he usually did it, so, after some concentration on the matter, his cerebration connected grease paints with actors and actors with costumes and costumes with costumers.

"The very thing," he said. "There's a costumer's shop three blocks away. Get your hat and we'll go there."

Worthington obeyed reluctantly. He had little faith in the suggestion; also he dreaded appearing on the street in his present state of disfigurement.

However, by holding a handkerchief over his bruise he made the few blocks without mishap and the pair climbed the stairs that led to a loft over the corner delicatessen shop. A showcase fixed to the wall at the street entrance contained some kind of a regal robe, a gilt crown

and a number of wigs, and a large hand pointing up the steps proclaimed the place of business of "August Dillman, Costumer."

A bell attached to the door announced their entrance, and at its clang Mr. Dillman, in carpet slippers and dressing gown, emerged from some place in the rear where, Jenkins judged by the odor that accompanied him, he had been engaged in compounding some sort of home brew of cabbage and onions. Glass cases along the walls displayed the apparel of kings and emperors and, too, there were uniforms, court gowns, and raiment presumably of the kind worn by the citizens of the boundless steppes of the Far West.

The naturally voluble Jenkins did the talking, while Mr. Worthington, modest by nature and by circumstance, stood in the background.

"Mr. Dillman," said Jenkins, "I want to get an eye painted."

"Vas is? An eye painded? Some foolishness you vellers make mit me. Now you ged right oud!"

Mr. Dillman, it appeared, was a suspicious sort of man. He had been the butt of the neighborhood jokesters who had worn his patience to the vanishing point. Moreover, he was accompanied by a long, low, rakish dog who, also being German, had, of course, no sense of humor and began to circle the intruders, exhibiting a most sinister row of fangs and emitting the while guttural growls.

Jenkins talked fast, putting, as it were, Worthington's eye in evidence, and it was only after this exhibition that Mr. Dillman relented enough to banish the dog, Hindenberg, to the back room and to consider their errand seriously.

Frankly, Mr. Dillman was dubious. He had never painted an eye, he said, and he doubted that it could be done. However, he would try. So placing the unfortunate Mr. Worthington on a stool at the front window he set to work.

With large, thick pencils of grease paint the costumer sketched the outline

of the contusion, then filled in, daubed, erased, and blended, cursing his efforts at times and frequently administering sharp rebuke to his subject for flinching.

The final result was ghastly. Worthington's cheek exhibited almost every color of the rainbow and, worse, the day being warm the unhappy Worthington had begun to perspire. Soon he began to take on a kind of streaky appearance, and Jenkins, who had watched the proceedings soberly enough up to this moment, suddenly gave way to a loud shriek of laughter. Nothing could have been more fatal to the enterprise. For Mr. Dillman, now convinced that he was once more the victim of a joke, became suddenly infuriated and, with a loud call for Hindenberg, ordered them out. With sharp and eager yelps Hindenberg, who had treacherously sneaked back into the room, came bounding forward. Worthington aimed a kick, but Hindenberg being built along the line of a U-boat and having an exceedingly low freeboard, the blow went high and Hindenberg seized upon his leg with hearty good will.

They escaped, somehow, tumbling most of the way down the steps and into the street. And here the irrepressible Mr. Jenkins used his last cartridge. "There's one thing we haven't tried," he said.

Worthington, with his handkerchief to his cheek and walking rapidly back toward the office, made no reply. He was through. Hope had fled and he sullenly resolved to surrender to Fate. Come what may, nothing could be worse than the things he had endured and of the future now he was indifferent.

"We haven't tried a leech yet," said Jenkins, keeping up with the other's stride with some difficulty; "and," he added with cheerful confidence, "I know that'll do the work. Dave Stinson says that he had a friend once who ran into a door and—"

Worthington wheeled and uttered one word: "No!"

Definite, certain and emphatic as Mr. Worthington was, the indefatigable Jen-

kins was not to be discouraged. So leaving his friend to proceed to the office alone he set out in search of leeches. After an hour he was successful at the tenth drugstore, though it was another hour before he returned to the office, having, unfortunately, stopped to relate the day's adventures to sundry acquaintances on the street.

"Here they are!" he said, bustling in as though he had run all the way, and at the same time producing a pill box from his pocket. "Here's the little vampires."

He shoved under Worthington's nose the box containing a half dozen squidgy objects, but Worthington was too discouraged to even look at them.

"Now, my boy, we'll have you fixed up in jig-time!" said Jenkins, inserting a finger gingerly in the box. "For a black eye there is nothing like a leech."

Worthington submitted hopelessly, and Jenkins, after dropping the slimy thing on the floor a couple of times—handling it as though he were afraid it would bite him—at last got it planted on Worthington's cheek. Then with great care and vastly interested in the experiment, he located the other five in a circle about the injured eye, accompanying his operations with a running fire of cheerful comment calculated to lift the spirits of his patient.

But in this last he met with no success, for Mr. Worthington was past all cheering. Tilted back in his chair, his face covered with leeches, the unfortunate man presented a remarkable appearance, and Jenkins, given to sudden attacks of mirth, mastered an almost overpowering inclination to laugh only by great self-control. Indeed, at one time he was obliged to rush out into the hall and kick himself heartily and, being detected in this singular action by the force of the adjacent office, he escaped their astonished gaze only by popping back abruptly into his own room.

An half hour passed and then Mr. Worthington, in as calm a voice as he could muster, made an inquiry.

"Does it look any better?" he asked. "Is it getting lighter?"

Mr. Jenkins answered from where he sat. "No. But they seem to be sucking away in great shape—give 'em time."

Ten minutes later Worthington straightened up in his chair.

"It's a quarter to five," he said. "I'm going home."

"Heavens, no!" protested Jenkins. "Stay here till about midnight, then you can slip in in the dark and in the morning you will be all right."

"I always go home at five," returned Worthington, "and I'm going."

With a determined movement he wiped the clinging leeches from his face and rose to his feet.

All argument to the contrary proved of no avail, and a few minutes later Mr. Worthington, with a handkerchief to his cheek, stepped into a taxi.

IV

LET us turn back now and look into the operations of the ice man, Mr. Finnigan. We find that he has had a full, round day; we also find Mr. Finnigan in a state of intoxication that, figured in dollars and cents, was almost priceless. Yet, strange as it may seem, this enviable condition had cost the ice man not a shilling. Beginning with the looting of the Holtzenheimer refrigerator, Finnigan left a trail of devastation behind him. An enforcement officer could have brought no greater calamity to the community for, the synthetic gin having smothered the ice man's finer feelings, he plundered regardless of consequences, and now at the close of the day and carrying a varied cargo we see him tacking against the wind.

Finnigan was just completing his third trip over his route—usually he made but one—cleaning up here and there remnants of Scotch, rye and rum, as the case might be, when a violently yellow taxicab stopped at the curb and a roly-poly little man crawled forlornly

out. This slight coincidence can be vouched for by Mrs. Worthington, who at the moment was sitting on the front porch rehearsing some things she intended to tell her husband.

As Mr. Worthington got out of the cab, the ice man paused in the middle of the sidewalk and regarded his customer with evident disfavor. A minor incident, it seems, rankled.

"Say, you!" he called. "Them milk bottles gotta be kept outta the box or ye git no more ice."

Now, these could hardly be called fighting words, yet they wrought a most remarkable change in Mr. Worthington's behavior. Normally a quiet and soft-spoken man, the calamitous events of the day had piled up, added to which were certain explanations that he knew his wife would demand, and the summation of it all was that Worthington's reason fled. For a brief ten seconds he became a maniac and, to the astonishment of his wife and of several neighbors as well, he uttered a wild cry and sprang upon the ice hawker. Using a golf term, Mr. Worthington followed through. One mighty swing did the work and Finnigan rolled into the gutter. As a matter of fact, a slight shove would have accomplished the same result, but the blow was powerful and for several moments the ice man lay still while the aurora borealis blazed and beautiful angels sang. In that interval of time Mrs. Worthington was bounding down the steps to her husband's side.

"Edgar!" she cried. "What has happened? *Look at your black eye!*"

A sudden, vast illumination dawned on the squash player, and turning he nonchalantly pointed to the flattened Celt.

"I have just whipped the ice man," he said.

"Oh, Edgar! Oh, you great big wonderful . . . brute!" she murmured happily, and there was a low, gurgling noise as she folded him in her arms.

Two Curtain Raisers

By John McClure

I

The Doom of Metrodorus

[A Trialogue in a Tavern]

THE scene is a café in Cairo. At a table, just beginning an excellent dinner of giblets of nightingales which they will wash down with Egyptian gin, sit METRODORUS ASTYANAX, PORPHYRY ARSANO, and PETRONIUS AMPHAX.

PORPHYRY

And you are definitively that Metrodorus Astyanax who says he sold his soul to the devil?

PETRONIUS

He is the same.

METRODORUS

Ay, for three hundred pieces of silver.

PORPHYRY

I am afraid you read it somewhere in a book. The devil—I can prove it to you in print—does not, as a matter of fact, exist.

METRODORUS

Bah! What do you know about it? I seen him.

PETRONIUS

He is as red as a lobster.

METRODORUS

I tell you I seen him, gabbled with him, drunk out of the same goblet, and spent the silver he give me in seven cafés. Is that no proof?

PORPHYRY

Well, and what would you say that he looked like?

METRODORUS

He had, as a matter of fact, a tail very much like a fox's.

PETRONIUS

He wears a hoof with a split in it quite like a pig's.

PORPHYRY

And what do you know about it?

PETRONIUS

To be sure, I see him when I am drunk.

PORPHYRY

Exactly. And Metrodorus, of course, saw him in precisely or somewhat the same condition. It was a liquorish or metaphysical apparition that appeared to Metrodorus. He merely imagined what he is ass enough to declaim as the truth. . . .

METRODORUS

Was the silver pennies I spent at the Bull of Isis and the Thebes Saloon metaphysical?

PORPHYRY

I am not saying that they would accept phantasms over the bar at any of those places, Metrodorus. But the devil you say you saw was certainly somehow illusory . . .

METRODORUS

He give me a paper and pen and I signed it.

PORPHYRY

But it was a dream, nevertheless. Indeed, I am afraid they will have you in books one day as very suspect from the standpoint of morals. There will be eventually, Metrodorus, very learned doctors inquiring into our dreams. . . .

METRODORUS

I seen him by lamplight.

PORPHYRY

It does not matter. He was a dream of some sort. And you will certainly be desperately humiliated in hell when the dream-books are published. They will omit nothing and will explain everything. And that dream of yours, Metrodorus, must be horribly significant. . . .

METRODORUS

Eh?

PORPHYRY

If you dream you see pigs in the ocean it means you are as lascivious as a barber. What it might mean to dream of the devil, I shudder to imagine.

METRODORUS

It's very lucky then that I seen him in fact.

PORPHYRY

It is quite plain, I am afraid, that nothing can budge you from your ridiculous opinion. But let that pass. Now that you have, as a matter of fact, sold yourself to the devil, Metrodorus, are you not—as it were—desperately unhappy?

METRODORUS

Me? I have a hundred pieces of silver.

PORPHYRY

Yes, but spiritually, Metrodorus, are you not—as you might say—dejected?

METRODORUS

I have been drunk since he give me the money.

PORPHYRY.

But is life not very hard for a man in your position, Metrodorus? Does not the humiliation of that transaction color your daily affairs?

METRODORUS

When I gamble, I win.

PORPHYRY.

I dare say. But they say that people avoid you; is it not calculated to make you ashamed?

METRODORUS.

But indeed I was never so much admired by ladies and gentlemen as since I seen the devil. Gentlemen envy me because I have money. Small boys reverence me because I am going to hell. And do the religious women, when they see me, run in the other direction? On the contrary. There is only one woman pokes two fingers at me and she is ninety years old.

PORPHYRY.

But the thought of the future, Metrodorus, does it not appal you?

METRODORUS.

If what I seen was a ghost, as you say it was, and couldn't really have been, I have nothing to worry about. And if I seen him in fact and he really exists, which is quite certain, I am not sure but I am still very well pleased. You admit yourself that hell is full of beautiful women and jolly companions.

PORPHYRY.

But have you any reason to think the devil will let you enjoy them?

METRODORUS.

He was a gentleman when I seen him.

PORPHYRY.

Well, it is quite plain nothing can be done with you. We had as well leave you alone.

METRODORUS.

But of course you will let me pay for the dinner?

PORPHYRY AND PETRONIUS

Assuredly.

METRODORUS.

I thought so.

(Metrodorus takes from his pocket a ghostly piece of silver and tosses it upon the table. It rings true.)

II

The Cruet of Marigolds

[A Dialogue in the Desert]

THE scene is an oasis in the Ethiopian sands. The tall palms, of which there are several, stand quietly like pillars of stone. There is, in general, a hush. Across the background moves in stately file a caravan of camels and elephants, majestic in the evening glow. At the side of the well in the foreground, sits a Saracen maiden, cross-legged. Her camel stands beside her in great dignity.

(Enter PORPHYRY ARSANO on a jack-ass. He dismounts, goes to the well, draws water, and drinks.)

PORPHYRY.

Madam.

MAIDEN

Sir.

PORPHYRY.

If this arrival of mine is in any sense an intrusion . . .

MAIDEN

Not at all.

PORPHYRY.

I hope it is not, for by the nails of your prophet, what-ever-the-devil his name was, I did not know you were here.

MAIDEN

It does not matter.

PORPHYRY.

But it matters a great deal. If I had suspected your presence, I assure you I should never have come . . .

MAIDEN

Oh! . . .

PORPHYRY

You must pardon my frankness, but the truth of the matter is, I am not amind to expose myself to the charms of women when I am so excessively busy.

MAIDEN

You flatter yourself.

PORPHYRY

I dare say. But even a metaphysician, I know well enough, is endangered when no other men are about. And ladies are pleasant.

MAIDEN

It does not matter. I know I am pleasant and I admit that metaphysicians are amusing. But what makes you so excessively busy?

PORPHYRY

The quest, madam.

MAIDEN

What quest is that?

PORPHYRY

You would never understand.

MAIDEN

It is not that that I asked you. I asked you what was the quest.

PORPHYRY

I search for the cruet of marigolds.

MAIDEN

But that is ridiculous. You search for something that cannot exist.

PORPHYRY

I said you could not understand.

MAIDEN

Nobody could understand a cruet of marigolds.

PORPHYRY

No, not without effort. The meaning in that harmony is very subtle. It escapes us. I will admit that I have searched for it in Syria and Thrace and the most of Egypt without finding it. But when I find the cruet of marigolds, madam, I shall have approached the mystery. I shall then be wiser than Ptolemy.

MAIDEN

But there is no such thing as a cruet of marigolds. How droll you are!

PORPHYRY

The cruet of marigolds sounds ridiculous to you, no doubt, and yet we know that so divine a harmony as it is cannot be really so. I search for the cruet of marigolds because I know very well that a spirit of light secretes itself in the sound.

MAIDEN

I see nothing but absurdity in such a fantastic quest. You would as well look for griffins in Bagdad.

PORPHYRY

On the contrary. That is a discord.

MAIDEN

Bah! And you have been looking for this—this cruet of marigolds long?

PORPHYRY

For a very long time.

MAIDEN

And you never grow tired?

PORPHYRY

No. We must search for something. We are all born hunters.

MAIDEN

You men.

PORPHYRY

We men, of course. If it is not birds or beasts or Greek piastres or war that we hunt for, it is something or other like the cruet of marigolds. I would as soon look for it as for finger-rings like a banker I know of in Antioch. I would as leave search Ethiopia for it as for a new kind of snuff-box like a player I know in Cairo. There is a bull-fighter in Cappadocia will go five hundred miles to see a good game of battle-dore and shuttlecock. There is a king in Abyssinia who is a great searcher for elephant tusks. And there is an old sot of my acquaintance in Tyre who is perpetually hunting for pieces of silver, which he puts in a box. It is merely accident that I find myself searching for the cruet of marigolds. We are forced by nature to hunt for something, and for something other than women. You are very charming. But beauty itself grows old.

MAIDEN

I am inclined to think that half what you say is true, for indeed my last lover was very fond of the chase of lions and ducks, and the previous ones hunted nearly everything, including fishes. One had a collection of stuffed crocodiles he had killed in the Nile. One was a breeder of horses who tried to develop a type that would run on two legs like a man. One was a great hand to be gambling. I could keep none of them home.

PORPHYRY

And those pastimes you considered quite rational, yet you laugh at the cruet of marigolds.

MAIDEN

But it is ridiculous and the jackass

you ride in your search is too funny for words.

PORPHYRY

On the contrary. It is the appropriate mount. I have proposed a bill to the Roman Senate, requiring Cæsar, at his triumphs, to ride the same beast.

MAIDEN

That would be droll.

PORPHYRY

It would be very poetical.

MAIDEN

I am tired of this talk.

PORPHYRY

So am I, madam, for indeed I am growing quite fond of you.

MAIDEN

That is pleasant. But you know, of course, that my lover must pay for my dinner.

PORPHYRY

Faith, if I knew it, I had forgotten it. But it does not matter. When I have found the cruet of marigolds, I shall send you a penny.

MAIDEN

Very well. I shall befriend you when you have found the cruet of marigolds.

PORPHYRY

Eh?

MAIDEN

I have said my lover must pay for my dinner.

PORPHYRY

I must away.

MAIDEN

You may come back when you have found the cruet of marigolds—if it is silver.

(Exit PORPHYRY ARSANO on his jackass.)



MAN tries to convince himself that his virtues are individual, his vices typical. "Look at these good deeds that I have done," he says. "Pass over those evil deeds; human nature is frail."



AFTER a love affair the man is fondest of picturing the effect of his sudden death on the woman, while the woman wants most to shock him with news of her marriage.



Point Me Out a Gnarled Pine

By Bernice Lesbia Kenyon

PPOINT me out a gnarled pine that bitter winds have shaken,
Bracing to the loud rain with branches rough and knotted;
Crash for me a discord whose harshness will waken
The mind cloyed with loveliness, and beauty-besotted.

Beauty like a stealthy thing,
Hiding deep in all I see,
Takes to dark adventuring
In the secret thoughts of me;

Beauty like a thrill of dread
Wavers in a music-note—
Runs in fire through my head—
Chokes the song that fills my throat;

Beauty like a passion spent,
Makes a sudden quietness,—
Fading out of pain,—content
In the end of a caress;

Beauty like a stilled tide
Near to ebb, quiet and brimming,
Holds me drowned beneath its wide
Depths of greenness, cool and dimming . . .

Fill me up with harsh things,—sight of lightning shaken
Over stormy pine-trees, to blasts of hurling thunder,—
Grasp me with your rough hands,—shout your shouts to waken
The stilled mind, with storms of sound to shatter dreams asunder!



THERE is one thing common to both man and woman. Both exist exclusively for the happiness of the man.

The Secret of Success

By Donald Ogden Stewart

I

THE young man in search of employment came at last to the inner shrine in that temple of Modern Business known as the Ellsworth Products Co. As he stood hesitating at the portals, one of the high priests advanced to meet him, chanting the greeting of his order.

"Mr. Ellsworth is a very busy man. A *very* busy man," he droned, and at each pronouncement of the name "Ellsworth" the heads of the seven stenographic vestals in the office were reverently bowed.

Five times that morning in five outer offices had the young man been told that Mr. Ellsworth was a very busy man; five times had his letter of introduction carried him through the efficient obstacles which guard the inner temple from the eyes of infidel unbelievers. And now, his pilgrimage ended, for the sixth and last time he gave his name—Richard Kennedy, his business—an interview with the president regarding employment, his credentials—a letter of introduction from one of Mr. Ellsworth's friends.

While this letter was being examined, young Kennedy reverently surveyed the temple.

At one end was a huge mahogany door—the entrance to the throne room. His gaze fell next upon the seven virgins, busy at their consecrated stenographic tasks. One glance at these maidens told him that he was indeed on holy ground, for they were of such loveliness as belongs only in the offices of high executives. Kennedy had al-

ready, in the course of his pilgrimage, noted the significant business fact that standards of office furnishings and stenographic beauty increase progressively as one ascends in the scale of executive rank—exemplified in the present instance by the impressive early Georgian hangings and late Ziegfeldian typists of this office as contrasted with the plain chaste furniture and plainer, chaster stenographers of the lower departments.

"Sit down, Mr. Kennedy," said the president's private secretary, "Mr. Ellsworth is a very busy man."

Young Kennedy obediently took the designated chair outside the throne room door, from behind which he could hear at intervals a faint swishing noise. He idly wondered as to its cause, and one heretical thought which occurred to him before he could check himself was that it sounded somewhat like the noise made by the swinging of a golf club.

His eye fell upon a magazine lying on a nearby desk. *Efficiency* it was called, *Efficiency—The Journal of Success*. He picked it up and was soon deeply engrossed in a fascinating article concerning a business man of Tacoma, Wash., who had actually eliminated twelve minutes wasted time per clerk per day by the masterful ingenuity of having the fountain pens of his employees filled each evening by the night watchman.

The next article, entitled "How I Make Men Like Me," was by Abraham Nussbaum, sales manager for the Sutco Tire Co., illustrated with graphic and convincing photographs of Mr. Nuss-

baum caught in the very act of making men like him. "The secret of my success," confessed Mr. Nussbaum, "is personality. Personality and pep—that's the stuff, boys!" And farther on in the article he gave this advice: "Radiate magnetism! Envelop your customer with your personality. Practise at home before a mirror until you are sure that everything about you radiates personal magnetism."

Young Kennedy looked around for a mirror, but before he had time for any practise in the radiation of personal magnetism, the private secretary announced that Mr. Ellsworth was ready to see him.

The swishing noise had ceased; all was silent behind the mahogany door. The high priest took the young man by the arm. A bell was struck, the seven vestals bowed their heads, the door swung open, and the worshipper beheld the Great Man seated on his throne. He stepped forward, trembling; the door closed behind him.

Richard Kennedy stood alone before the president of the Ellsworth Manufacturing Co.

"Well, young man—" and President Ellsworth directed at Kennedy those keen eyes which, as described in the April number of *Efficiency*, seem to "look right through you."

"Yes, sir," said young Kennedy. And then he added, by way of explanation, "Yes, sir."

"Well, young man—what do you want?"

The idea of wanting anything suddenly seemed so incredibly blasphemous to the young man that for a moment he was silent. Then he ventured to give his name, his request for employment and his letter of introduction.

Mr. Ellsworth adjusted an impressive pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses to his nose and gravely examined the letter with that shrewd, keen glance which had so impressed the interviewer for *Efficiency*. His shrewd, keen comment, "You want a job, young man?" after he had finished the letter asking that young Kennedy be given a chance,

showed that he had instantly grasped the fundamentals of the situation.

"Yes, sir," replied Kennedy, adding, apologetically, "I'm just out of college."

President Ellsworth took off his eyeglasses. There was an impressive silence. Finally the Great Man gravely clipped the end off a cigar, lighted it slowly, and spoke:

"Young man, when I first came to this city, I didn't have a cent. Not a penny."

He paused and closed his eyes to let the full significance of this fact sink in upon young Kennedy.

"Young man, listen to me."

The room was hushed. The smoke from President Ellsworth's cigar gradually settled around his head, covering him as with a cloud. Outside the building all noise of traffic had ceased. The sky was darkened. Suddenly there came a terrific clap of thunder, and from the cloud surrounding President Ellsworth was heard a voice saying:

"Young man, there are three rules for business success. The first of these is 'Don't watch the clock,' the second 'Don't be afraid of getting your hands dirty,' and the third 'Work just a little harder than the other man.'"

As he finished, the cloud ascended and President Ellsworth sank back exhausted.

The young man, overcome with emotion, could not speak. It was one of those rare moments in which words are superfluous; his heart overflowed with joy that he, of all people, had been chosen to be the recipient of the Great Man's secret of success.

It was Mr. Ellsworth who finally broke the silence.

"You will report to Mr. Augustus in Department 12 on Monday morning."

The young man's eyes shone with gratitude as he thanked his patron. A bell rang, the door opened, and with bowed head he backed out of the presence of the Great Man.

II

THE following Monday he who had miraculously received the three com-

mandments descended from Mount Sinai and went to work as clerk No. 4 in Section No. 8 of Department No. 12 of the Ellsworth Products Co. at a salary of \$15 per week. Inasmuch as Richard had never been good at penmanship or long division, this was probably considerably more than he at first merited.

At the commencement of his business career, in fact, on the very first morning, the young man came perilously near damnation; forgetting, in a moment of weakness, the first commandment, Richard was just on the point of *looking at the clock* when he remembered. It was indeed a narrow escape, and he shuddered for weeks afterward every time he thought of it.

The second commandment also caused him a great deal of real worry at first for, in spite of all his efforts, his hands were often quite clean.

The observance of the third and last commandment, "Work harder than the other man," didn't seem quite so difficult; in fact, in Richard's department, it was almost suspiciously easy.

After a few weeks Richard's hard work combined with his college education began to have its effect on his superiors, and sometimes he was entrusted with the addition of three and four columns of figures—a responsibility which the young man assumed with a modesty and capability which greatly pleased the older heads.

Richard did not spend his evenings in idle pleasure, either, as did the young men who had not been so fortunate as to have been entrusted with the three secrets of success. He subscribed for the Benjamin Franklin course in business administration, and after reading fourteen books he was quite ready to take an executive position in any business. He knew what caused panics and just how to prevent them; he learned that the cost of labor and materials was apt to increase periodically provided that some other factors did not cause a decrease.

So they made him a clerk in the filing department and he was entrusted with

the stamping of the word "Filed," with the date, on every letter.

This promotion did not, however, make Richard conceited, and his innate modesty won him many friends among the other employees with whom he was quite popular as soon as it became known that he was a friend of Mr. Ellsworth's.

One day, after Richard had been working for six months as filing clerk, he conceived an efficient idea for saving time. This was no less revolutionary a scheme than to cease stamping both the word "Filed" and the date, and simply imprint the latter in a certain definite place which would, of course, signify that the correspondence had been filed on that date. Richard worked hard in perfecting this idea; he figured out that it would eliminate 302 movements of the clerk's arm in a day, which, allowing for Sundays, holidays and half days on Saturdays, would mean the saving of 87,580 movements per arm per clerk per annum.

When his idea was finally ready he took it to his immediate superior, Mr. Wilkes.

"That's all right," said Mr. Wilkes, for he believed in encouraging young men, up to a certain extent, "but the Routine Book says that the correspondence must be distinctly stamped 'Filed.'"

"But—" began Richard, and at that the patient Mr. Wilkes took down the Routine Book and pointed to the exact page, section and paragraph which supported his contention. This closed the argument.

Or rather, it would have closed the argument had Richard been a less ambitious young man.

But the more he thought about his idea the more efficient it seemed; he discovered also that in his previous figuring he had not allowed for the fact that the clerks worked overtime and all day Saturday during the winter months, which made his net total of saved-clerk-arm-movements per person per annum 92,365 instead of 87,580.

Fortified thus with an additional

argument, this young Luther bravely contemplated nailing his thesis to the door of no less a person than president Ellsworth himself, but in several attempts he got no nearer that sacred portal than the office of the second assistant general manager, who coldly imparted to him the not entirely unknown fact that Mr. Ellsworth was a very busy man.

Then in his hour of despair Richard remembered Abraham Nussbaum—the sales-manager who had so successfully radiated personal magnetism in the pages of the *Efficiency* magazine. Three hours a night for the next five nights young Kennedy spent in front of a tall mirror, with a copy of Nussbaum's article on "How I Make Men Like Me" spread out before him; on the morning of the sixth day he was ready to try his skill. Behold—a magnetic smile at breakfast and the waitress forgot to charge him for heavy cream on his corn flakes; another smile, through the window of the café, and a street sweeper outside ran in and embraced him. This last was rather embarrassing, and Richard deliberately shut off as much of the magnetism as possible until he could reach the office. But he was so charged with personality that four newsboys, two beggars, a plumber and a traffic policeman followed him to the door of his office, overpoweringly attracted to this magnetic young man.

In the office his progress to the throne of president Ellsworth was triumphal; managers, secretaries, stenographers—all instantly liked him and made way before his "Nussbaum" smile. But as he stood alone before the president all of young Kennedy's magnetism was promptly short circuited by the Great Man's patriarchal impressiveness.

"Well, young man," said Mr. Ellsworth, fumbling among the papers on his desk.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I am Richard Kennedy, sir. I have a plan which I have worked out for eliminating a great deal of unnecessary work in the clerical department, sir. It will save 92,365

movements of a clerk's arm in one year—and in ten years—"

During this speech the president had continued the search among his papers.

Suddenly he fixed his shrewd, keen gaze on young Kennedy and said "Humm."

Then, before Richard could reply to this, the Great Man pressed a button and a stenographer appeared.

"Miss Meyers," said the president, "did you see a little leather notebook of mine?"

There was a minute's silence. Richard trembled as he thought of the portentous possibilities of those notes—undoubtedly his complete record with the Ellsworth Products Co.

The fatal little book was found and handed to Mr. Ellsworth. Young Kennedy, in dumb suspense, watched the features of the Great Man for any sign of hope. At last the president shook his head sadly and muttered, "I ought to have had an 84 easily. Six strokes on number twelve—a par 3 hole—six—"

He looked up and saw young Kennedy. The shrewd, keen look returned instantly to his impressive features which, in the previous moment of forgetfulness, had carelessly become quite human.

"Well, young man?" he said.

"Why, sir," replied Kennedy in stubborn desperation, "I want to tell you about my plan for saving waste time in the clerical department."

President Ellsworth took off his gold-rimmed eyeglasses and listened thoughtfully as Kennedy unfolded his scheme.

When the young man had finished he sat lost in deep thought for some time, before he gave his answer.

"Young man," he said at last, "when I first came to this city I didn't have a cent. Not a penny."

He paused and closed his eyes to let the full significance of this fact sink in upon Kennedy before he resumed.

"Young man, there are three rules for business success. The first of these is 'Don't watch the clock'; the second, 'Don't be afraid of getting your hands

dirty'; and the third, 'Work just a little harder than the other man.'"

The Great Man paused—then added:

"I hope that answers your question, young man."

"Yes, sir," said Kennedy gratefully as he bowed out of the room. "Thank you very much, sir."

III

KENNEDY returned from his second pilgrimage to the Oracle greatly strengthened in his resolve to keep holy the three commandments on which hang all the laws of the profits. He realized more than ever before that it takes time and hard work to win true success. At the office he set to his task with added zeal; in the evenings he pored over his new correspondence course in Modern Business which guaranteed executive ability and a handsome set of nine books for \$65.

But after a few months more he began to grow restless. He felt that possibly he wasn't getting ahead as fast as he should; somehow there wasn't at all the old thrill in adding figures, initialing correspondence and in being efficient.

Furthermore, there had been a distressing visit to a Vocational Expert. While perusing his beloved *Efficiency* magazine one evening, his attention had been caught by a full page advertisement which demanded, in big type, "Young Man, Are You in the Right Job?" Under this was a photograph which Kennedy supposed at first to be a horrible example of a young man *not* in the right job; more careful study showed it to be Morris Stuttgart, A.B., Vocational Expert, who for \$25 would analyze your character and advise you at once as to your real life work.

So Kennedy called on Mr. Stuttgart and after sitting for half an hour in a strong light while the expert analyzed his character, he got a headache and the information that he had an unmistakable aptitude for a musical career. He thanked Mr. Stuttgart, paid his \$25, and

lay awake that night wondering why his parents had let him drop his piano lessons.

The next noon he sat at his desk, trying to concentrate on the chapter in his business course concerning "How to Write Effective Business Letters to Japan and China," when Mr. Fisher sat down beside him to pick his teeth. Mr. Fisher was a kindly chief clerk who sported three 18 karat molars and a 14 karat watch charm, the latter a present from his fellow clerks on the anniversary of his Twentieth Year with the Ellsworth Products Co.

"Well, Kennedy, what's new? Aren't married yet, are you?"

This was Mr. Fisher's daily question; Kennedy's daily answer was: "Well, not yet, Mr. Fisher. Can't get a girl to take me. How's Mrs. Fisher today?"

Kennedy had a sincere interest in the domestic welfare of his fellow employees, and never faltered in his daily enthusiasm over the latest photo of the wife and kiddies.

Mr. Fisher shook his head mournfully.

"She had a bad night again with her stomach."

Mrs. Fisher's stomach was a subject on which the whole office got minute daily reports. Then he added, "What are you reading?"

"Why, it's the Dearborn Business Course. Pretty good, but I guess you can't get much out of books. It's the hard, practical experience that counts, isn't it?"

Kennedy possessed the modest attitude of assumed contempt toward mere book learning which college men diplomatically employ when speaking to those who are unfortunate enough to have Henry Ford's cultural background.

"Well, the Dearborn course is all right. Not as good perhaps as some others," replied Mr. Fisher, mentioning three or four names.

"What, you've taken all those correspondence courses, Mr. Fisher?" said the amazed young man.

Here was something wrong; surely Mr. Fisher couldn't have absorbed all

that knowledge as to how to be an executive and still remain a chief clerk.

"Oh, sure, I've read them all," was the answer.

"Well, tell me, have most of the clerks here taken the course?" asked the young man.

"Sure," was the surprising answer. "Long ago."

"Well, then, how about Mr. Schmidt?" The mystified young man mentioned the name of one of the highest officials; probably some handicap had kept the clerks from being executives; quite likely they had been "clock watchers" or even worse, afraid of getting their hands dirty.

"Oh, Mr. Schmidt?" said Mr. Fisher. "Well, that's different. You see, he married Mr. Ellsworth's oldest daughter. Certainly a dandy fellow, too—Mr. Schmidt. Calls me Ed—always joshing me about my kids." And Mr. Fisher chuckled reminiscently.

"Oh," said young Kennedy. "He married Mr. Ellsworth's daughter. I see. And how about Mr. Spencer, the vice-president?"

It was Mr. Spencer who had patted Richard several times approvingly on the back when he had found the young man studying during the noon hour.

"Spencer—say, there's a regular man," replied Mr. Fisher. "Nothing stuck-up about him. He asked Bertha and I to his wedding—married Kitty Ellsworth, you know—the old man's second daughter. My, it was some swell wedding, I'll tell the world."

"Yes," said the young man. "It must have been."

Then there came to him the vision of J. D. Ellsworth battling his sturdy way from poor boy to president.

"But," he said to Mr. Fisher, "but, how about Mr. Ellsworth? He came to this city without a cent, and by following three rules he won his way to the top. Told me so himself."

"Yes, sirree!" said Mr. Fisher. "That's just what he did. I can remember when he first came. I was his boss for a while. Used to say to him, 'John, do this now,' or 'John, hurry up.'"

There wasn't any 'Ellsworth Products Co.' then. It all belonged to old Walter Kinnard, and when he died it went to his daughter Ethel. I guess you've met her—"

"Why, no—where?" said young Kennedy.

"She's Mrs. J. D. Ellsworth, the old man's wife, you know," was the answer.

The door of the office opened suddenly and young Kennedy looked up at the sound of a woman's laugh. A plain young girl swept by them and passed into the inner sanctum.

"Say, isn't she a beauty?" whispered Mr. Fisher with awe in his voice.

"Why, no—I wouldn't pick her out of a crowd." The young man listlessly surveyed the book on business efficiency.

"Don't you know who she is?" said Mr. Fisher.

"Why, some stenographer, I suppose," replied Kennedy.

"She's Ellsworth's youngest daughter, Grace," said Mr. Fisher in the same tone of voice with which he would have mentioned the deity or John D. Rockefeller.

"What? Ellsworth's got another daughter?" cried the young man, clutching Fisher's arm.

"Sure."

"Married?"

"No—just nineteen."

"Oh," said young Kennedy.

IV

So he married her.

V

THIRTY-FIVE years later a trembling young man stood in the impressive office of Richard Kennedy, President of the Kennedy (formerly the Ellsworth) Products Co.

"Yes, sir," he said eagerly to Mr. Kennedy. "I want to show you that a college man can start at the bottom and work up."

President Kennedy took off his gold rimmed eyeglasses.

"Young man," he said, lighting a cigar, "when I first came to this city I didn't have a penny. Not a cent."

He paused and closed his eyes to let the full significance of this fact sink in upon the young man.

"But I made three rules which I al-

ways followed. They are the secret of success."

"Yes, sir," said the youth, eagerly.

"The first rule is, 'Don't watch the clock'; the second, 'Don't be afraid of getting your hands dirty'; and the third, 'Always work just a little harder than the other man.'"



Pastoral

By Robert Hillyer

HERE in the field beside the wood
 The grass is withered where he stood
 From dawn till dark day after day,
 Watching and listening, until
 Wasted with loneliness he lay
 Under the autumn twilight-gray.
 His sheep are scattered over the hill.

When eyes were blind and lips were dumb,
 Then did she think of him, and come
 Back to the pastureland they knew
 And meet a phantom in the chill
 Morass of sedges white with dew?—
 But miles are long and years are few.
 His sheep are scattered over the hill.

Here in the field beside the wood
 The grass is withered where he stood.



WHAT a man knows about love depends upon the kind of woman he learned it from.



FRIENDS never really understand each other until they begin to quarrel.



Responsibility

By T. F. Mitchell

THE party was in full swing. Wine flowed freely and the guests were all more or less inoculated. Revelry was rampant. He felt that the affair was a success. He was the host. He took his responsibility heavily. He knew what was expected of him and he did not shirk. He was the drunkest of all.



Poets

By Gordon Malherbe Hillman

WE, who come with the morning,
Are neither good nor bad,
Only a lass with golden eyes,
Only a laughing lad!

We, who come with the morning,
Have naught at all to bring,
Only a song of heedless youth,
The lilt of laughing Spring!

We, who come with the morning,
Bring neither food nor fire,
Only a song of a love long lost,
Only your heart's desire!



IT is the women who have to pay for the folly their husbands exercise in choosing wives.



The Captains

By Eleanor Ramos

I

GRANDMA D'ARCY was a very little woman, no bigger than a well-grown child of twelve. You never saw Grandma wearing any color but black, and Mother told you that she, neither, had ever seen her wear other than black dresses.

Grandma was a fragile creature. Her ears were unbelievably tiny and were the color of one of Mother's good china plates that had been carelessly left a few minutes in the oven. When she stood before a window, you could see clear through her ears. Her ears and her skin were the most fragile things about her, and her hair and her false teeth were the strongest. Her hair always remained red, and she could sit on it. Her false teeth were too large for her little face and the red rubber gums made her thin lips look lavender in contrast. But she seldom showed her gums except when she yawned.

II

ONE Spring day Mother took you shopping with her in Fulton Street, Brooklyn. Mother was buying black pins. A gilded cube was covered evenly with round shining heads of black pins. Mother waits for the change to come back in a singing silver box. You look at the other articles on the counter. There are kid curlers, such as the one Mother wears on her forehead in the morning. There are pins in papers which you do not like so well as those in the gilded cubes. There are also many other things, the uses of which you do not know.

The silver box comes back, swaying and clicking on a slender wire. A girl with a black apron and a part in her hair snaps the singing box from the wire. She opens it as if by magic and gives Mother nickels and dimes and two quarters. Also the cube of pins, square and bulky in a flat paper bag.

"Now let us go to a place where there are lots of pink and blue silk—and yellow," you suggest. "And party dresses with standing-out ruffles."

"No, we haven't time. We are going to Grandma's house," your mother answers. "And you will see something there," she says, so that your short legs will move quicker.

Because of the way your mother speaks, you think it will be a baby.

"Is it, Mother? Is it Grandma's baby?" you ask.

But your mother tells you to watch where you are going and not talk so much.

III

You don't go to Grandma's house in the subway; nor in an elevated train. You go in a trolley car. The car has long seats facing each other, and there are always people with spreading feet on the seat opposite you. The seats are covered with rough carpet that makes little square holes in the top part of your legs when you wear short drawers. The car smells of dust from the carpet.

Today the windows of the car are open. You kneel up on the seat and get holes in your bare knees instead of in your legs. The car goes along

Fulton Street. You know Fulton Street intimately. You are sure that it is the most beautiful street in the world. You know the names of the big department stores and also the name of the small shop where your mother buys gloves and corsets. And there is also the store where she has tea and cinnamon toast and you have ice-cream. You like that store the best of all.

You only look at the side of Fulton Street that has these stores. You only know the other side slightly. There are shoe stores that your mother does not even glance at, photographs in glass cases; and at one place a huge negro dressed smoothly and brightly, who smiles at you and gives a card to your mother. Your mother says that he belongs to a dentist. Your mother only comes on this side of Fulton Street when she is in a hurry and wants to walk quickly without stepping on people's heels.

But what you like best about Fulton Street is the roar of the elevated trains overhead.

IV

WHEN the car passes Borough Hall and turns around, you know that you have almost reached your grandmother's house. Your mother told you that even after the car turns it is still on Fulton Street. But you know it is not your Fulton Street. There are no stores where you would care to buy things. You mention this to your mother and she says:

"Grandma remembers when all the big stores were on lower Fulton Street; it used to be very smart."

But you know that no one would think of buying the things that are in the small windows you pass. Dull furniture and dark pictures. Tall brass candle-sticks such as you have seen in church, and ice-boxes. The only pretty thing you see is a window full of flowers made of china. And little dogs, too, of china. You

know the dogs are of china because they are just doll dogs. It is harder to know that the flowers are not real. Your mother has to tell you that.

"What does that sign say?" you ask your mother, pointing to a narrow red building with a large sign over the door.

"Gentlemen Only. Twenty-five Cents a Night"—and don't point," answers your mother. She also tells you that it is a hotel for sailors.

You get out at one crossing after the hotel for sailors. It is about time, for you are getting sick from the car. There is a peculiar smell in the air. It is the smell of the river; your mother told you, a long time ago, and you remember it now. Grandma's house is one street over. You walk quickly because you suddenly remember that there will be a baby at Grandma's house. You imagine it: Grandma will be lying in her bed with a lace boudoir cap on, and a red-faced baby will be in bed with her. You have seen your aunts with new babies.

Grandma's street is not a quiet street. Italian children roll everywhere and fat women bulge out of the windows and say things to the children in loud voices. Grandma's house is on the corner, though, and somehow that makes a difference. Besides, Mother said that she had lived there before the Italians came. Father was born there. Grandma preferred living there alone to living in your house in Flatbush.

You trot up the brown-stone steps alongside of Mother. From the top step you can look straight down the street and see the ships on the river. Impatient ships waiting to go and tired ships resting after having come. There are ships with tops that stand stiff and fat like many of your aunts, the same size at the top and bottom. Mother told you once that they were smoke stacks and belonged to steamers. You like better the ships with slender tops, complicated and drip-

ping with fine ropes and cords. Your mother told you that these were schooners and were pushed along the ocean by the wind. There are fewer of these ships now, but Mother said that when Grandma was a girl there were no steamers at all. Grandma's father used to own ships that were pushed by the wind. *Your* father also has a ship, but it is a steamer. He is its captain and you have seen him only three different times in your whole life.

V

You notice the door-bell for the first time. Over it hangs a beautiful gray ribbon. And on the gray ribbon is a length of little green leaves.

"Oh, Mother," you cry, enchanted. It is beautiful to see ribbon on the door-bell.

Your mother is not surprised. She smooths her hair and takes your hand firmly.

"Don't make a noise when you come in," she tells you.

Your mother opens the door without ringing the bell. The hall is full of piled-up things of wood and carpet—carpet like that on the seats in the street car. You ask what these things are, and your mother tells you that they are camp-chairs.

There are people in the front parlor. A strange smell, too, a little like moth-balls, but sweeter. The long curtains on the windows are covered with dark cloth and there is a big box where the high desk used to stand. Behind the box are many flowers. They do not seem to be pleasant flowers. Not the kind you get on your birthday. The marble-topped table that used to stand in the middle of the room is also gone, and also the music box that stood on it.

Without speaking to the people, Mother walks over to the box. It is a shiny box, the color of the new library table at home. You know that this is what she said you would see. You demand to see and she lifts you

up for a minute. Grandma is lying in the box. Her eyes are closed and her lips are more lavender than ever. You notice candles burning at one end of the box. Grandma does not wear a boudoir cap and there is no baby.

VI

You stay all night at Grandma's house. Each time you look into the front parlor Grandma is still asleep and there are more flowers. The next day people come and go all the time. No one rings the bell. They just walk in. Perhaps they cannot find the bell beneath the gray ribbon. They speak in whispers, but in sharp whispers that are easy to hear. They whisper, but they want to be heard. All their whispering is about Grandma:

"Married when she was fifteen!"

"Thirteen children, and she the size of a child herself!"

"All twice her size: boys and girls, they're all the image of what their father was—all D'Arcys!"

By evening, the back and front parlors are full of people. Women with wrinkly faces and rich clothes and heavy rings, and men whose knees make a noise when they kneel to pray at the box where Grandma sleeps.

"Born, married, and died in the same house!" the women wheeze to each other. "It doesn't happen in these days!"

The men talk of other things. They speak of Wards and ask each other if they remember what sledding there used to be on Columbia Heights. "No more old-fashioned winters," they say. And then they remember Grandma and look sad for a minute.

VII

THE dining-room is closed off from the front and back parlors. Your uncles and aunts are there. And

you are expected to stay there and not go into the parlors. It is crowded with furniture that belongs in the parlors: the tables that fit into each other, the high desk, the curio cabinet, and the marble-topped table. There is nothing left in the front parlor but the box where Grandma sleeps and the square piano. You keep your eyes open for the music-box but you can't find it. Your grandma always allowed you to play it when you came to visit with Mother.

You liked to visit Grandma. The parlors were pleasantly dark. There were long double hangings on the windows and the carpet was very thick. The first thing your grandma did was to give you her cheek to kiss. Then she took the littlest table from the nest of tables.

"Please, may I pull the bell?" you would hasten to ask.

Grandma would nod, without moving her lavender lips. You would get up and pull the red rope that hung at the folding doors. Far away downstairs the bell would jingle. Soon Katie would come up the stairs, walking heavily. Katie was the servant. Grandma said she was not a maid. Katie would bring a slender glass of blackberry brandy for you, and on the tray there would also be a blue and white plate with slits around the edge, just like the slits in your dresses where your mother ran ribbons. On the plate would be two crumbly cakes with caraway seeds in them.

"Don't get crumbs on the carpet," Grandma would remind you, as she left the room with Mother. "And when you have finished you may walk in the garden!"

VIII

"I SIMPLY can't realize that she had so many children," your Cousin Betty was saying in the dining-room. You were sitting behind the long curtain at the French window. They

had forgotten to send you to bed. If it were daytime, you could open the slides of the blinds and see the garden.

Cousin Betty's father is your Uncle George. Then there are Uncle Michael, a man who laughs suddenly, and Uncle Nat, who has freckles on his hands. And Uncle John. And many others that you don't think about until you see them. They used to be Grandma's children, just as you are Mother's child. And you have aunts, too: Aunt Julia, who has gray hair and who speaks in a strange voice, as if two people were speaking at the same time in her big mouth. You forget the other aunts, but you know there are a great many. They were Grandma's children, too, when they were little girls. They have children who are your cousins. You have many other cousins besides Cousin Betty.

Your father is a child of Grandma's also. He is in China and cannot pray at the box. Grandma is very little to have had so many children. Your mother is twice as big and she only has you. You understand what Cousin Betty means.

IX

BEHIND the long curtain it is pleasant to hear the aunts and uncles talk. Sometimes you hear your mother's voice and very often Cousin Betty's. And you smell the cigars the uncles are smoking.

"How did Grandma look when she was young? I don't think she was so bad looking, was she?" Cousin Betty asks that.

"She was the prettiest girl on the Heights," says Aunt Julia in her strange voice. "She had thick red hair and skin like china. And pretty little teeth. And one eye was green and the other brown. A sign of fascination."

"What happened to her teeth?" asks Cousin Betty

"She lost them when the children

started to come," answers Aunt Julia.

"They pulled your teeth out in those days when they started to go," Uncle Michael says, laughing suddenly. "No X-ray pictures then; no bridge-work; no platinum fillings, either."

"Why did she marry when she was fifteen?" asks Betty, after they had spoken a lot about dentists.

"It was because of the captains, I've heard," answers Aunt Julia discreetly. "Even when I was a child I remember how they used to come to see my grandfather when his ships came in. Wild boys who knew too much. Before my mother was married they used to bring her presents from the Indies and China. She had a necklace of pearls and brightly colored shawls, and always a silk dress or two—and silk was not a common stuff in those days. But after she married she always wore black."

"And what harm could the captains do her, Aunt Julia?"

"Her father and mother were afraid that she would marry one of them. And they were wild boys without religion. My grandfather had two clipper ships that used to sail around the Horn to California, and often to China. I remember the ships well. Manned by Lascars who wore turbans and only ate certain food. And would only eat it sitting facing a certain direction, mind you! The captains of these ships used to come to talk business with Mother's father. They would drink wine in this room, and it would be 'Miss Anna' this and 'Miss Anna' that. She knew that her father did not like her to come into the room while they were there. She would listen at the door and hear them say, 'Where is Miss Anna?' 'Saying her prayers,' her father would answer back. 'Well, here is a little gift for her,' they would say, and pull something fine out of their pea-coat pockets. Sometimes she would be courageous and come in. She would

thank them in a trembling voice but with bright eyes.

"What shall it be next voyage, Miss Anna?" they would ask. And her father would say in a loud voice, 'The lass has plenty! Don't disturb her, if you please, Captain.'

"Before she was fifteen, two of them had asked leave to marry her, although she never knew it. She was little and young, but not a child by any means. She was accustomed to seeing many men and she used to read novels. One night her father caught her in the front parlor—where she lies now, God rest her!—in the arms of Captain Roberts, of the clipper ship *Panther*, a Welshman and a black Protestant.

"Her father said nothing then, but spoke to her mother, a weak-minded woman, I think. And they found her a good man for a husband, and married her off within six months."

Everyone was quiet, like in church, and you were almost asleep behind the curtain.

Cousin Betty said, after a while: "What kind of a man did they marry her to? What kind of a man was grandfather?"

"He was a good man. He never worked; he had a little money and it wasn't necessary for him to work. He stayed at home and never let your grandmother out of his sight. Yes, he was a good man, and faithful."

"Perhaps he was jealous of the captains, Aunt Julia."

"Her father retired from the shipping business the year of her marriage. There were no more captains."

They are quiet again until one of your uncles mentions that the man they married Grandma to was as old as her father. It is Uncle John. He says:

"Wasn't Father very old, Julia? I remember him as an old wrinkled man, but strong."

"How could she love him?" Cousin Betty wants to know.

"What a thing to say, child!" Aunt Julia scolds. "He was her husband; of course she loved him. They were never separated for even a night."

"I should think she would have loved the captains," Cousin Betty argues. "You knew that she was running her fingers through her short hair."

"Maybe she thought she loved the captains, but girls in those days listened to their parents' advice. Besides, you are right, John: he was thirty years older than she was. He was like a father to her more than a husband."

"But if she had thirteen children, how could he have been like a father to her?" Cousin Betty questions, very quickly.

The aunts and uncles cough in a chorus.

Aunt Julia can always think of words to say.

"You get married to have children," Aunt Julia says, almost as quickly as Cousin Betty.

"I think her mother and father were disgusting," says Cousin Betty. "I think they were horrible! I'm ashamed they are my great-grandparents."

"They felt they were acting for the best. You know, if she married a captain he would have taken her to China, most likely, and made her neglect her religion, maybe. Or maybe ill-treated her." That is Aunt Julia's voice.

Then you fall asleep behind the curtain instead of in your bed where you belong. With Grandma in the box, everything is strange and delightful.



Limbo

By M. G. Sabel

LET us, when the end is ended,
 Seek that place
 And search in the burnt grass
 For the charred edges
 Of our dream.
 Let us look there
 For the frayed and faded
 Ribbons of remembering.



A WOMAN in love is the greatest of all cosmic powers. A man in love is the least thing under the sun.



Rum, Reading, and Rebellion

[*An Essay*]

By John Macy

I

I CAN endure patiently the aqueous dullness of dinners and the muffling of midnight joy. As we approach middle age, we find that revelry, even under the old sparkling conditions, is less charming than we once thought it; at least we can live cheerfully without it. But there is one placid, innocent pleasure, a pleasure mingled with enough moral and intellectual profit to give it dignity, which the lewd hand of prohibition has spoiled, almost destroyed. That is the pleasure of miscellaneous reading, the sweet delight of picking up any book one happens to pick up and surrendering to it in the chaste and peaceful security of one's own fireside. I rebel against the intrusion of the prohibitionist and his infernal laws into the sanctuary where I, a mere harmless reader, commune with better minds than mine.

The outrageous nature of this intrusion and the particulars of my complaint against it I shall set forth presently. But before I arraign prohibition from the reader's point of view, I wish to make some brief notes on the problem of the relation of alcohol to the author, to the creation of literature. The author comes before the reader, but their fortunes are inseparable; one would die without the other.

It is an unsettled question—let us be as fair as we can with the dubious evidence given us by physicians and psychologists—it is an unsettled question whether and to what extent alcohol helps or hinders the cerebral processes

of the artist. The scientific facts are not established, and the biographical facts concerning most artists are fragmentary—in some cases veiled by the affectionate or prudish reticences of biographers, in some cases deliberately falsified, in most cases inconclusive. Mr. Cabell, speaking through his mask, Charteris, apropos Marlowe, says: "Whatever one might desire the case to have been, there is really no doubt that in the production of an astoundingly large number of masterpieces alcohol played the midwife." Well, I think there is some doubt, and I mistrust "astoundingly" as a too large word flung into the proposition by emotion and not by reason. Marlowe seems to have been a magnificent drinker, and the fact, if it be a fact, that he was killed in a tavern brawl confirms the case for him or against him. But we do not know whether he wrote when he was half loaded or whether he went on periodic sprees and worked hard between debauches in a state of austere sobriety. That many of his lines are splendidly wild and rush riotously among the stars proves nothing. The hottest lines may be written with a cool head. And a hot head may produce cold mush.

If we know nothing definite about Marlowe's habits day by day as drinker and writer, we know as little about the habits of his contemporaries. Did Ben Jonson, a man of pre-eminent sanity and industry, as his work shows, crook his powerful elbow every night or get boiled once a week? Did he have a stout constitution and a remarkably steady head? One thing we may

assume: he and his companion poets in the Mermaid Tavern did not drink water all the time. But we can never know what effect alcohol had on their poetry. A century later there was just as much boozing, but there was less poetry.

Well into the nineteenth century drinking was taken for granted. Everybody drank or did not drink according to his nature and tastes. It was not until the era of Victoria, who was descended from a noble line of colossal boozers, that biographers began to be morbidly inquisitive about the alcoholic capacity of great brains. To be sure, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were plenty of kill-joy Puritans; but when they attacked a man like Marlowe they damned him as an atheist and blasphemer, and said nothing about his cups. They were concerned with the major sins. There were cases of ethical hysteria and intellectual confusion, such as that of John Bunyan, a banal mind, a tedious pseudo-allegorist, who did not know that making a solemn parody of imaginative passages in the Bible is a worse crime than playing tip-cat. There are fools in all centuries. But worry about other people's alcohol is a nineteenth century disease, a mild stomach trouble to begin with, developing in the twentieth century into dreadful forms of insanity.

II

In biographical literature alcohol does not cut much of a figure until the end of the eighteenth century. Let us glance at a few of the records, or what in biography pass for records:

ROBERT BURNS. Sincere two-handed booze-fighter. Stevenson says: "It is the fashion to say he died of drink; many a man has drunk more and yet lived with reputation and reached a good old age." Robert Louis was a fair performer himself. Probably got full more than once with Henley, who was a superb anti-Puritan. See Henley's "Let us be drunk and for a time forget." There are some touching sen-

tences in a letter of Stevenson's to Henry James: "I have had to stop all strong drink and all tobacco. . . . I suddenly find that a glass of claret or a brandy-and-water give me a splitting headache the next morning. . . . I do not like to think of life without red wine on the table."

WORDSWORTH. Full once according to the "Prelude." Occasion seems to have been a Milton celebration! W.W. was a famous skater all his life, but on ice.

COLERIDGE and DEQUINCEY. Preferred opium. Cases remind one of Browning's lines in "Clive":

Noticed how the furtive fingers went
Where a drug-box skulked behind the honest
liquor.

KEATS. Liked wine. Verses full of it. Too bad he did not live to drink barrels of Italian vintages. Prudes have made much of his boyish declaration that he liked to put pepper on his tongue and let wine run over it. "Beaded bubbles winking at the brim." Can you beat it?

BYRON. Copious, gay and melancholy drinker. High old times at his house. Says that in the morning he used to wring the necks of many bottles of sparkling water.

LAMB. Consistent gin-guzzler. Wrote "Confessions of a Drunkard." Fools took it too seriously. Came back with "Confessions of a Water Drinker." See in Colvin's enlarged Life of Keats, published two or three years ago, an account of a party including Keats, Hunt, Wordsworth and Lamb. Lamb tight, funny, and bored. Colvin, a pretty sensible biographer and not, on the whole, a moralistic ass, cannot refrain from saying that Lamb was "alas!" under the influence. Why "alas!"? Lamb lived to be fifty-nine, was efficient at a clerical job for many years, and wrote and read at night. Knew just a little bit about books and about the art of writing. Wouldn't you like to have been at that party? And don't you wish you had some of the kind of gin that Lamb drank?

DICKENS. Jolliest praiser of punches in all English literature. Guess he knew how they tasted. No hint of drunkenness. A prodigious worker.

THACKERAY. Probably had a good time in Paris and even in London: No very definite record. Shows more sympathy for Richard Steele, a confirmed rounder, than for any other of the "English Humorists."

CARLYLE. A grouch. An exception to Stevenson's assertion that Scotland is a drunken country.

RUSKIN. Tut! Tut!

FITZGERALD. Translated Omar. Terrible assault on British morality. Abhorred attempts to explain his Persian away and adapt him for the Salvation Army. "His worldly pleasures were what they profess to be without any pretence at divine Allegory: his Wine is the veritable juice of the Grape: his Tavern, where it was to be had."—Preface to the first edition.

TENNYSON. A port-bibber.

BROWNING. Knew the flavor of Italian wines.

TROLLOPE. Says in his "Autobiography": "If a cup of wine has been a joy to me . . . wine has brought me to no sorrow." Industry too amazing for credence if the interminable novels were not there to prove it.

SWINBURNE. Periodic souse. Got stewed in a club and jumped on the hats in the coat-room. Occasion of a parody of one of his lyrics, the parody beginning: "What shall we do with all our hats?" Episode not recorded in Gosse's official biography. According to Gosse, Swinburne never gets drunk. He has "excesses in London" and goes to the country to recover. Amazingly prolific, industrious and studious for more than fifty years. Some of his prose, at its worst slovenly and verbose, may have been written when he was drunk. Possibly also some of the lines in which he seems to be writing parody of himself. Most of his lines, written under the influence of such liquor as the gods drink, unknown to mere mortal lips.

ROSSETTI. Preferred his alcohol

mixed with chloral. A bad dose for poet or painter. *The* supreme master of the sonnet, excepting none, not even Shakespeare.

PÖE. Drank, but was not a drunkard. Died at forty leaving ten volumes which even in the least distinguished pages are notable for clear, precise workmanship. His exquisite manuscripts were not penned by a shaky hand. Biographies of him, both hostile and friendly, are a mess of misconception.

HOLMES. Took good care of himself and lived to be eighty-five. His last book was very lively and delightful. Satirized prohibition in "Ode for a Social Meeting: With Slight Alterations by a Teetotaler."

LOWELL. Got stewed when he was elected class poet at Harvard and with a hangover stood up in Appleton Chapel and bowed to his classmates. For this crime he was rusticated by the college authorities. No record or rumor of later escapades with the Demon.

MARK TWAIN. A consistent old-fashioned Western whiskey drinker. Wonderfully steady head, eye, hand and legs. Describes a midnight dinner in Boston: "Osgood full, Boyle O'Reilly full, Fairchild responsively loaded, Aldrich and myself possessing the floor and properly fortified." Nice definitions of three alcoholic degrees!

HOWELLS. Sent Bartley Hubbard to the devil on about enough beer to make a cat sick. When Mark Twain called on him he had to remember to send down to the grocery store to get a bottle!

III

I HAVE considered only a few artists in English letters, and leave it to more competent critics to study the lives of masters in the other arts and of continental writers from Q. Horatius Flaccus to Paul Verlaine.

Now for my complaint, as a mere reader. It used to be a great happiness to sit in an easy chair or lie in bed and read and smoke, with a glass or a stein

on the reading-table. If the drink and the book together put me to sleep, there could be no deeper bliss. If the drink had an enlivening effect and I imagined myself a keen critic, competent to give the author's ideas a pretty little twist all my own, the delusion was harmless and happy. But my real complaint is not simply that my reading-table, like my dining-table, is dry. My misery as a reader lies in this: literature is a vast conduit of alcohol and every book I begin to read for fun reminds me of good things to drink until my throat aches.

This is an honest record of the books I tried to read in one evening. I give you my word that, except for a little deliberate and confessed sciolism on the last page, I have not searched through my library for references to alcohol in order to get neat illustrations for this paper. If you will not take my word, the self-evident lack of relation between the books may carry conviction. That day I had read other books or parts of them as a professional chore. The books I shall speak of I took up in an idle way as recreation, with no duty toward them, free to drop them if they bored me. The first was the second series of Galsworthy's plays. I had never read or had forgotten "The Eldest Son." I began it and was going merrily along through the dismal thing, when, near the beginning of the third act, I came to this stage direction: "A Footman enters with a tray of whiskey, gin, lemons, and soda water." Not only whiskey, not only gin, but both! I don't know how that distressed family got out of their troubles, and I don't want to know. I hope they all died of thirst.

My chum had been reading, and had left on the table a shabby book in an ugly green binding that I had not seen for years, an English translation of some tales by Erckmann-Chatrian, "Stories of the Rhine." I reached for it listlessly and began. Bacchus and Gambrinus! It was not water that ran in that river in the brave old days. It was Rheinwein. The people bathed in it. In the first story a young man sets

out to seek his fortune. He doesn't know just which way to turn, so he goes into a tavern and orders a can of wine. Thus it is in the English—a "can" of wine. And then he orders another can of wine. He is not a dissolute fellow, but a sturdy, ambitious man. Later in his prosperous life he narrates his adventures to his former master "with some bottles of old Rudesheim before them." Not *a* bottle, but *some* bottles, to start with before he begins his narrative. I don't know what finally happened to him. I hope he was drowned in the Rhine.

I got through the next two yarns without strangling and then I received the supreme shock, so stunning that I could not move. I could not drop the story but read it to the bitter end, panting, fascinated. It is the tale of a drinking bout "the like of which has never been known in Holland within the memory of man." It may be cruel to make you suffer with me, but listen! "A cask of ale was placed on the table, and two pots containing a pint each were filled to the brim." The contestants "drank them off at once, and so on every half-hour with the regularity of a clock until the cask was empty. Then they passed on to porter, and after porter to lambic." I don't know what "lambic" is but it must be great stuff. The struggle with strong beer lasted three days and three nights and then they finished off with Schiedan, "the oldest and the strongest." The purpose of the contest was simply to decide the ownership of a painting. I detest that pair of collaborators, Erckmann and Chatrian, and I hope they died in a garret of a terrible fever.

I went to bed but I could not sleep. There had been something in the newspapers about Mitchell Kennerley's having found the manuscript of Oscar Wilde's "Portrait of Mr. W. H." It seems to be a longer version than that which appears in Wilde's collected works. I got up and found the volume of Wilde's prose in Nichols' Cosmopolitan Library, a neat little book easy to hold in bed. The "Portrait of

Mr. W. H." is only moderately interesting. I read it through peacefully. Then I turned in the same volume to Wilde's one novel, or long tale, "The Picture of Dorian Gray." It isn't very gripping late at night if you know the plot and are familiar with the epigrams that Wilde used twice, in this story and in the plays—a thrifty poverty for so clever a man. But I was soon sailing along easily, charmed with the slightly stale beauty of the phrases. Alcohol, as you know, plays no part in this ingenious story. The excessive use of it would be a minor vice in the progressive degradation of Dorian. But I was not to be left in peace. In the third chapter I fell headfirst into this: "Philosophy herself became young, and catching the mad music of Pleasure, wearing, one might fancy, her wine-stained robe and wreath of ivy, danced like a Bacchante over the hills of life, and mocked the slow Silenus for being sober. Facts fled before her like frightened forest things. Her white feet trod the huge press at which wise Omar sits, till the seething grape-juice rose round her bare limbs in waves of purple bubbles, or crawled in red foam over the vat's black, dripping, sloping sides." Like Dante's lovers, in that book I read no farther.

IV

WHEN I name the next book that I looked at that night I know the reader will accuse me of having selected it maliciously for the purpose of this discourse. I swear it is not so, and to back my oath I will give the circumstances that led to the selection. They are rather interesting in themselves, if the reader cares for this sort of half literary gossip. An editorial paragraph in the *Freeman* a few days before had spoken of the Bible as an indispensable source of sound English style. Oddly enough, that same week on the front page of the *Literary Review* of the New York *Evening Post* was an article on style and good English in which the writer pointed out that the style of the

King James Bible, magnificent as it is for its own purposes, is not in all passages and in all respects a good working model for the kind of English we should like to write today. I fell to meditating on two things. First, it is queer that two writers, probably not in communication with each other and having no common piece of news to set them both going, should happen on the same subject in the same week. Then I considered in a half-sleepy way which of the two views was nearer right and whether they were really opposed. I thought of Matthew Arnold's saying that the kind of prose a modern man would be glad to write should begin with Dryden, that English prose before Dryden, however beautiful, is archaic and not for us to imitate. Here, I lazily thought, was a possible essay. So partly from professional motives I slid out of bed and got the Bible.

The Blessed Book reeks with alcohol from Genesis to Revelation. The connotations are sometimes joyous and sometimes sinful. The pious grape-juicers who invoke Divine Authority in support of their coercive measures seem to forget a part of the record which they accept as the true expression of the will of God. But be careful how you argue with them, and be sure to look attentively at the pages that you take out of their book to refute them withal. For the account of the first vineyard and the result of its fruits is a rather bad story. You will find it in the ninth chapter of Genesis. Father Noah got drunk, and his drunkenness led to the sin of his son, Ham, for which Ham and his descendants were cursed and condemned to be the servants of the rest of the human family. Noah seems to have been none the worse for his debauch and to have led an exemplary life thereafter, for he lived nine hundred and fifty years. Some of the ancient fathers acquit him of guilt on the ground that he was the first drinker and did not know what the effect of the new-found beverage was to be. Others argue that before the deluge men were not ignorant of wine, which,

as one commentator puts it, "is a liquor so generally useful and agreeable that it could scarcely be unknown to Adam himself." But the commentators are only secondary authorities; according to the Bible wine began its career with an unsavory episode.

It soon acquired dignity, however, and became a recognized form of wealth. Isaac sustained Jacob "with corn and wine"; the venison seems to have been furnished by Esau. Jacob's son, Judah, "washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." This was a way of expressing the richness of his inheritance. As one of the temporal good things wine was a symbol of spiritual blessings. Isaiah, intending the freedom of salvation, says: "Come buy wine and milk without money." In other passages wine is used metaphorically for something undesirable, as in Jeremiah 25:15, where the Lord says: "Take the wine cup of this fury at My hand." On the whole, the Biblical evidence as to the virtues and dangers of wine is contradictory and so is true to the experience of the race. In the parable of Jotham

wine "cheereth God and man." On the other hand, according to Proverbs xx: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

But I am not writing a commentary. Look up for yourself in a concordance all the references to "vine," "vineyard," and "wine." That is what I did just now, as a matter of professional interest. That night, you may be sure, I did not reach much beyond Genesis, but fell asleep finally in a state of arid exhaustion, from which I awoke with a more rebellious thirst than ever flourished of a morning after a real night before.

V

SOME day I shall go to Paris or Florence or Munich and sit in a café next door to a book-stall and read and read and read and drink and drink and drink. But in a civilized country I shall be able to read in comfort, and, losing myself in books for many long hours, I shall think little about drink because it will be at hand. And that is the moral.



My Songs

By Ward Twichell

*MY songs, they must be of stone,
My songs, they must be star-dew;
O men, who are water and earth,
My songs must be made for you.*

*And so my songs shall be yours,
Shall throb with your vain heart-beats,
O dreamers who battle life,
O doers whom life defeats.*



Almanach Chinois

By Stella Frances Wynne

January

THE Moon of January is the Lantern of Ti-Ming-Wa, the Old, as he steps down the stairs of the stars.

February

The Moon of February is a silver Bubble, blown by the breath of Wang, the Child, across infinity.

March

The yellow Moon of March is the Candle of the Maiden, Ah Ling, who goes through the sky searching for her lover, the Day.

April

The Moon of April is a pale Rice-Flower that twelve times blooms for the Lady, Hsi-Yuan-Wu.

May

The Moon of May is a bright Ball which Kai-Si, the Mother, tosses nightly for Wing, the Baby.

June

The blood red Moon of June is the Heart of Ah Moiy Ming, the Courtesan, dead but still desirous.

July

The Moon of July is the silver Cup out of which Fong, the Ever-Young, drinks Wine of Light.

August

The full Moon of August is the bright Breast of the goddess, Kar-Yak, from which the veils have fallen.

September

The Moon of September is the Pail of Chu-i, the Scavenger, in which he gathers ashes of Dead Light.

October

The Moon of October is the round Net of Sing-Po, the Fisherman, which he drops into the cool, blue pools of heaven to dip up stars.

November

The purple Moon of November is the bruised face of Suey Soi, the Hurt, upon which black finger marks show.

December

The Moon of December is the Parasol behind which Ping Moi, the Dancing Girl, hides her face from the dark Mandarin, Night.



The Wife

By M. L. C. Pickthall

LIVING, I had no might
To make you hear.
Now, in the inmost night,
I am so near,
No-whisper, falling light,
Divides us, dear.

Living, I had no claim
On your great hours.
Now the thin candle-flame,
The closing flowers,
Wed summer with my name,
And these are ours.

Your shadow on the dust,
Strength and a cry,
Delight, despair, mistrust—
All these am I;
Dawn, and the far hills thrust
To a far sky.

Living, I had no skill
To stay your tread.
Now all that was my will
Silence has said;
We are one for good and ill
Since I am dead.



At the Feet of the Goddess

By Ben Hecht

I

TO be sure he was only a shoe clerk, but how cruel to judge him for that. True, mediocrity is of interest to the mental palate only when salted with borrowed sins. Yet the key of C may be found in Wagner and I have heard Ysaye play a double stop on the open strings with fascinating results.

What I wish to insinuate is that there is a faint danger of artistic loss in dismissing a shoe clerk with the mild snort of *ennui*, of flooring him with the casual chuckle of contempt. Many a noble and diverting heart beats under an Uppenheimer - College - Style - for-Men-with-a-Belt-in-the-Back coat. Let us not be literary prigs and seek only to read of ditch diggers, washerwomen and street cleaners. Agreed there is more pithy stuff in them. Granted they are more spicy and invigorating. But mediocrity has its usages. Given a box of matches and a sense of beauty, it may produce an incendiary. Given a moment of imagination, it may achieve a vulgarity both piquant and arresting. What indeed are Prohibition, Segregation and Charity but the mesalliance of mediocrity and imagination? And what more provocative of art than that which is inartistic? The soul reduced to a Sunday School superintendent may yet glimmer with divine, if psychopathic refractions. The brain reduced to a mathematician may yet write "Alice in Wonderland."

I emit this prefatory ballyhoo lest some intelligent reader turn from my chronicle of Lionel Pierce even as I turn daily from the fictions of my con-

temporaries—convinced by titles and opening sentences that they are but so many exaltations of our national stupidities, chiefly of the one concerning the unhappiness and downfall of evildoers and the ecstasies which overwhelm those citizens who obey the Ten Commandments and the City Ordinances, and never watch the clock while giving their time to their employers. Yet I hope that, unlike myself, the true cosmopolite of-art will not give the raspberry to my shoe clerk. Rather will he raise his eyebrows with that gentle tolerance; that polished and tasteful *éclat* which characterizes the magazine reader of the day and murmur:

"What, ho! If there be shoe clerks in the world, fetch them forth and give us a fable of them."

Without further apology I plunge into my tale.

II

LIONEL PIERCE was a young man of twenty-seven. Nature, which is glibly pronounced as abhorring a vacuum, was yet kind to his head. It had favored him with patent leather hair. It had endowed him with the features of the eldest son of a Greek god. Thus, were those disinherited divinities at large today, Lionel might have been legendized as the magical offspring of some modern Demetrius and a Sozodont ad.

He had precise and elegant legs, referring to his visible trousers. His collar, high and immaculate, contributed a forbidding grandeur to his neck. His tie and vest were the visualized dream of a *Saturday Evening Post* illustrator. Rosy fingered Aurora would have

envied him his nails. During the day Lionel spent most of his time perched on the mahogany salesman's stool in the luxuriously carpeted chamber of the Florenz Boot Shop, his supercilious fingers holding silently, though argumentatively, aloft some poem of a boot.

He was one of those *passe partout* aristocrats that the timorous seeker after shoes encounters in the boulevard shops. He was one of those to whom the flat and stockinged foot is offered with a wince of shame, whose eyes, touching furtively upon a hole in the sock, give its miserable owner a sense of spiritual suicide.

During the day he discharged his duties with the grace of an Aeolian shepherd, and the *hauteur* of an abdicated Czar. Before the cringing foot of the male he remained patronizing and aloof. His delicate confidence that its owner desired no pair of boots under fifteen dollars was the secret of his success. Man is at his worst with his shoes off. His dignity, his character, his shrewdness are shattered. He is a creature ludicrous, a defenseless mammal squirming and denuded. Sitting in the leather-backed chair of the Florenz Shop, his lumpy, graceless feet revealed, the male customer was invariably at Lionel's mercy. He could but cringe and wriggle his toes while sums of less magnitude than the fifteen dollars stuck haplessly in his throat, and long in silence for a civilization which would produce barefooted, crippled shoe clerks.

Confronted with the debonair hooflet of the flapper, Lionel's manner underwent a crafty change and a politely roughish air was his. Measuring deftly these subtle miniatures which appealed as more designed for caresses than locomotion, Lionel became conscious for the moment of the boudoir haunted worlds beyond his reach. There was in his touch as he applied the measuring rod always the trembling and pathos of an impecunious connoisseur. Furtively his eyes sought the youthful face hovering above him. And to the extended little foot, waiting with an intimacy not to be

found in the eyes overhead, Lionel brought dainty and scrolled bootlets, searching the stock shelves for exotic specimens of factory art.

Such moments were the climaxes of his day. Never did he betray himself. Polite, tireless, impersonal, he gave no hint of the emotions which involved him. The business finished, the shoes sold, the flapper and her intriguing hooflets vanished, he returned again to the more humdrum aspects of the trade with the sense of having dreamed.

As a shoe clerk, however, Lionel rose to the heights of his profession when faced with the arrogant and mature pedal of true Society. His gentleness with imperious callouses, his ease and propriety in the handling of dowager corns, endeared him to the heart of such proud and sensitive patrons. He combined the manners of automaton and flatterer. He achieved silences more adroit than the tongue of genius. He gave vent to gestures which soothed, and yet at the same instant enslaved the eye.

Thus from day to day Lionel Pierce occupied the mahogany footstool, for seven years. And in his twenty-seventh year at two o'clock of a September afternoon, Elaine Diske entered the Florenz Boot Shop, sat herself in a leather-backed chair, extended her ravishing foot, and that mockery of logic called by men *Destiny*, fastened upon Lionel and brought him to her side.

III

ELAINE DISKE was an actress regarded by public and critic as a creature apart from the flamboyant hurly-burly of the theater world. Cultured, with a beauty almost fragile, she represented one of the anomalies of the American stage—a woman of refinement and intelligence. Thus, she could be moral without being bourgeois, she could be immoral without sacrificing either her sense of humor, or her altruistic instincts. On the stage she regarded her profession

with sufficient indifference to make her a serious actress. Off the stage she looked upon life with enough seriousness to make her an indifferent spectator. Despite the hallelujahs which ever surrounded her, she remained too egotistical to be vain. She was read and traveled. She did not go in for babies or benefit performances, for chicken farms or suffrage, but by devoting herself to her work, keeping herself aloof from Sunday supplements and press agents, she had achieved in eight years a position of autocratic distinction in the theater-mind of the nation. Her alertness came to be hailed as art; her aloofness as virtue; her beauty as genius.

Lionel Pierce deftly removed her grey shoes and busied himself with the measuring rod. The foot which confronted him pierced even his sophistication in the matter. It was neither pretentiously tiny nor did it hold itself with that self-conscious daintiness which characterized the usual foot of its fetching contours. It was an unblushing foot, a cultured foot, an uncompromised foot. It presented itself as oblivious of Lionel's somewhat trembling fingers as the eyes of its owner were of his plastered hair. It waited without grimace, without restlessness, a self-contained, Sphinx-like foot seeking neither to conceal nor to plead. Before it Lionel bowed and sighed carefully. It was perhaps the logical moment for the fellow's undoing and the foot of Elaine Diske was perhaps but one of the frequently celebrated blind instruments of Fate.

Still aloof, the creature supplied her name and her hotel and was off. Lionel's eyes followed her as he stood with the shoe box in his hands. A delicate pain nestled into his heart, causing him to adjust his already perfectly adjusted tie, to smooth his already perfectly smoothed hair. Such are the sweet vanities of kindling love. As he remained gazing toward the door a sense of vague loneliness overcame him. Suddenly were the routine of life and the days which he had lived things of

disturbingly minor import. A tenuous and spiritual laceration crept through his being. A desire for some hopeless transformation overpowered him.

In a slight daze he eyed the name he had written on his salesman's tablet:

"Elaine Diske, Blackstone Hotel."

His memory awoke and slowly focused. Elaine Diske—the actress. A smile came to his lips. The word actress spelled hope, in many ways. What was not possible with an actress? The vision of the arched and oblivious foot which he had breathlessly measured, whose silken facing had seemed to him a part of itself, whose curvings lost in the dim and mysterious region of lace and shimmer had caused him to sigh; returned to him, luring and hopeful. He would seek her out. She was probably playing in the city. He would discover her, pursue her, ensnare and captivate her. A tense flush spread over Lionel's face. A giddiness unbalanced him. For the first time in the seven years Lionel Pierce forgot himself. For the first time imagination, lovely and vaulting, had penetrated the mediocre depths of his shoe clerk soul.

That night—as the movies have it—Lionel Pierce sat in the audience of the Illinois Theater and gave himself up to the charm of his divinity.

The play neither interested nor entertained him. He would have preferred "The Thirteenth Chair" or "The Man Who Came Back."

But Elaine, quiet, sophisticated, fragile, appeared and disappeared, stamping with each moment her radiant image upon the semi-consciousness of her admirer.

Quitting the theater Lionel moved homeward, his thoughts awry. Such wooing was at best vicarious business and expensive. To sit grimly anonymous in the vast auditorium and offer up his soul to the impervious Elaine, was a courtship which offered small matter for Lionel's new imagination to batten upon. Action was what his inner tumult demanded. There would have to be maneuvers of a different

sort. He would figure them out and pursue them.

But what?

How, after all, thrust himself upon the lady?

How burst into her vision, inflame, beguile, and win her?

How hurl himself across the areas which he sensed between them?

Cowardice and the habits of Lionel's mediocre past urged flight, forgetfulness. But something of another stripe raised its shining head in his meditations and counseled him strangely.

Of such unprecedented queries were Lionel's meditations as he let himself into his boarding house and sought his couch. During his seven years as shoe clerk he had never permitted himself the dangerous luxury of falling in love with those who sought his services in the Florenz Shop. Now and then, some unusually arresting foot thrust before his bland eyes had contributed a dim and passing dream to his idlings. But always he had contented himself with consorting with maidens of less luring but more approachable guise. Now, tucked between the sheets of his hall-room lair, Lionel Pierce let his fancy roam, his shoe clerk heart quailing before the future which this new quality of imagination conjured for him.

IV

Two days passed and Lionel, his original ardor cooled, was nevertheless meditating upon another visit to the theater. Dim and wraith-like had become the memory of Elaine Diske and her disturbing foot. Yet it persisted, roving the hitherto unoccupied areas of his soul, sending quaint shivers to the seat of his spine at the most unexpected moments. In the midst of his meditations on the second day, the door of the Shop opened, and Elaine Diske, accompanied by a woman older than herself, appeared. Thus do the idiot gods pursue those whom they would ruin. For the second time Lionel outfitted the foot of his dreams, dallying about the business, endeavoring to capture the impersonal

eye of the lady, struggling pathetically to inform her of his presence. But the actress, barring a few monosyllables, remained impervious to his overtures. In vain the exquisite gesturing of the fellow, the low throaty queries, the poised bootlets, the precise movements to and from the stock shelves. She conducted talk with her companion, and when pressed by the fellow's insistence, she answered him without turning her eyes upon his figure.

Bitterness and defeat were in Lionel's heart as, for the second time, she quitted the shop. He was of a mind to let the lady go her heartless way; to have done with the yearning which disturbed; the dreams which tortured.

But he reckoned without his ego. This new quality, which, as has been monotonously intimated, was the magic of destiny working in the waste spaces of Lionel's brain, illuminated the fellow with unholy notions. Throughout the remainder of the afternoon he labored, strangely preoccupied, aghast at his thoughts, trembling before the urgings of his spirit. At five o'clock he stepped from the Boot Shop with a wavering movement to his legs, a leaping to his heart but an unbridled glint in his eye. To the Blackstone Hotel he made his way. Into the effulgent lobby he progressed. Before the desk he stood, pen poised over the register. And with quivering fingers he inscribed his name therein, with tremulous knees he followed the glorious bellhop.

"Five dollars a day," he whispered to himself, sinking into the armchair beside his new couch. "I'm a fool."

Desperately he scrubbed his face, brushed his nails, polished his shoes with a towel, adjusted his raiment and, after several long breaths ventured down into the lobby again. He would need, perhaps, to make a trip to his boarding house and accumulate some of the super vestments which had hitherto done him service on occasions of state. But for the time he was content to sit in the lobby, to eye the groups of easy mannered guests that came and went.

He had not planned ahead. The item

of the introduction had presented itself to his disordered brain but had been lost in the roseate mists of his dreamings. Now it loomed before him again, an obstacle insurmountable. Until late in the night Lionel remained in his chair, gradually acclimating himself to his surroundings and observing with a keen eye the poise of his fellowmen. No sight was there of the actress, however, and his eyes, wearied with contemplating the two entrances, at last longed for sleep and to sleep in his new bed Lionel went.

The thing being started it carried the fellow along of its own impetus. Transferring a suitcase of tunics and accessories to the hotel, Lionel was rewarded the next evening. Elaine, for so he now termed the lady, appeared, floating out of the white enameled elevator and alone. A panic possessed Lionel. He would have flown but flight was impractical. Fastened to his seat he remained while the lady came closer, ever closer, grew larger, ever larger in his eyes, and finally deposited herself gracefully in an adjacent armchair.

For a burning moment Lionel observed her eyes turned toward him, a curious, half familiar light in them, as if she were on the verge of speech. But she remained silent and, her face averted, Lionel gazed at her glowingly. There was a pallor upon the fair cheeks, a certain subtle weariness to the poise of the actress which caused him to wonder. As he watched, the older woman he had seen with Elaine in the shop appeared and, approaching her companion, nodded at him casually. The slight recognition brought a recurrence of the panic in Lionel's bosom.

Here was another obstacle. What if this second creature remembered him as the shoe clerk? But no! Perish the notion. He sprang to his feet. Impulse rather than reason inspired him. Unknowing of what he would say, heedless of what consequences might befall, Lionel Pierce, with the clairvoyance of the blessed, seized the opportunity which had been dropped before him, bowed nimbly to the woman who had

nodded upon him and murmured in a clear, high-pitched voice,

"I am so glad to see you again."

His words brought the eyes of the two women upon him. A vague and faint smile turned the lips of the actress. A somewhat puzzled light kindled the face of her companion. Deep in his interior Lionel sensed a great fact. The woman had recalled his face, his manner, had recognized him vaguely, but had been unable in the instant to place him. Likewise Elaine.

"It's been so long," went on Lionel, speaking through a terror and confusion which almost transfigured his tongue. "I don't wonder. . . ."

The older woman spoke.

"I really cannot recall," she said. "But I am certain."

"Mr. Pierce," said Lionel with an astounding blandness, "Mr. Lionel Pierce."

The merciless shaking which had seized upon his limbs was slowly leaving him. God-given faculties seemed to struggle into being in his brain. A devil-may-care impulse, a sense of strange security, obliterated the natural inanity of the man. Elaine Diske watching him, frowned agreeably.

"The name is familiar," she said.

"It seems odd to meet you again, here," countered Lionel.

How far the thing would carry he had no thought. Fortune was smiling upon him. Perhaps.

"Seven years ago," he struck out.

"In Monte Carlo?" the actress queried, raising her eyes full to him.

"Oh, no, Miss Diske," he assured her.

"At Ostend," suggested the older woman. "I—"

The impulses rioting within Lionel caused him to nod his head. Ostend it was.

"I just arrived yesterday," he continued, "and I hadn't heard you were playing in Chicago, Miss Diske."

"Miss Graceland is going on for me tonight," the actress announced. "I really don't know whether I'll be able to finish the engagement here."

"I think I had better run along," the evident Miss Graceland suggested.

"Good-bye, Helen," the actress murmured, "and great luck."

"I'm very glad to have met you again," vouchsafed Lionel, rising, and a moment later he found himself sitting beside the creature of his dreams, listening to her words and reddening under a peculiar searching glance that the lady fastened upon him.

V

SUCH episodes as this seem on the first taste totally lacking in logic. A pox upon logic. A pox upon the dicta which demand that the realities of the fictioner be precise and mathematical things, which insist upon the geometrical regulation of events. Contemplating the meeting of this Lionel Pierce and the lady of his dreams, I am smote by an element of suspicion. There comes to me the amazing notion that the thing happened not at all, that the episode is a libel upon psychology. Thus have my literary laborings undermined me. Some years ago, ere I fell to evolving narratives out of the material of my life, I was still naive enough to tell the truth without turning a hair. What though this truth wore a ludicrous air, what though it seemed a ridiculous and rakish thing, I could nevertheless blurt it forth with a witless aplomb and experience neither chagrin nor guilt.

But today I am steeped in the Rules of Composition. I can look blankly upon a fact and proclaim it improbable. In muttering my memories for the purpose of fable making I exercise usually a sophisticated caution. Do I find one of those kinks of destiny known as coincidence, I forthwith straighten it out, and at the expense of true verity preserve the air of realism. And even though I plunge into a tale with a grim ambition to chronicle the unflinching truth, certain subconscious forces now seize upon the data in my thought, remould and reconstruct, reorganize and adjust, until there issues upon the paper a beguiling perversion of event related

in no way to the truth and yet wearing a superior probability, a more persuasive logic.

In the matter of Lionel Pierce, however, I have endeavored to hold firmly to the fact, even though my artistic sensitiveness has shuddered through ten paragraphs, even though my sense of craftsmanship has cried out upon this blasphemy against the Rules of Composition. There he sat, this Lionel, a certain numbness in his brain, a strange quivering about his heart, and there beside him, talking melodiously, sat Elaine.

There was uppermost in Elaine's thought as she chatted, a puzzled and amused concern with the man beside her. Vainly she endeavored to focus her memory upon him. She was aware of having encountered him previously under some distinctly formal conditions. But more than this her truant memory would not reveal. She rehearsed swiftly in her mind soirees, ensembles, episodes, scenes, conversations, affairs in which this precisely attired gentleman might have figured—somewhere in the background. And finally, with a little laugh at her stupidity, she decided to be amiable and give the fellow the benefit of any doubts which might intrude.

Her decision in the business was perhaps influenced by a peculiar loneliness which accompanied her. Barring professional acquaintances, Elaine had spoken with no one since her arrival in Chicago. Unknown, personally, and admired too profoundly, the lady found herself as her youth slipped nimbly from her, the victim of her reputation. This reputation placed her beyond the intimate intrigues of her profession. Ordinarily amorous and diverting gentlemen underwent a peculiar lethargy of impulse in her presence. Her somewhat amused and aloof air served to chill; her renown for virtue served to discourage; her intelligence and obvious culture served to intimidate even the most accomplished of the Lotharios.

Worn down by an indisposition caused by a week of stomach trouble,

she had given her part into the hands of her understudy and decided to remain at the hotel for the evening, retiring early to her room to read and remember things whose ghosts still had the faculty of diverting her. The appearance of this vaguely mysterious person in the armchair beside her had, for the moment, offered a possible opportunity for pleasing if aimless intrigue.

"I really can't quite recall it," she resumed after a few polite sentences. "But I know I have seen you. Indeed, I feel quite willing to presume upon the fact."

Glancing at Lionel, noting his carriage, his air of elegance, she felt satisfied with her decision. As for Lionel, a sigh of relief floated through the corridors of his being. As has been divulged, he had not planned for any recognition, and the possibility of being identified as the shoe clerk in the Florenz Shop had almost undermined his poise. Now that the danger was over there was little to fear. Having purchased two pairs of shoes, there was small likelihood that the lady would seek out the shop again.

A craftiness, a subtlety came over Lionel. For the moment he was cunningly conscious of his various and intricate lackings. Who knew what plebeian gesture might betray him, what hapless banality might dissipate all chances of success? Shrewdly he recognized that his safest course lay in a strategic silence, a silence which would nevertheless be adroit, piquant and inspiring. But in his fears he counted without Elaine. Renowned among her few chosen friends as a conversationalist of merit, she launched at once into a monologue which Lionel had the temporary intelligence not to stem but to punctuate with pregnant monosyllables.

Drawing deep breaths of the night air, freshed by the spiced winds from the lake that vaulted in now and then through the revolving doors of the hotel entrance, the actress experienced the totally illogical emotion of comradeship and mental communion with the

fellow at her side. For several moments she spoke of the theater in Chicago, proclaiming it somewhat superior to the theater in New York, inveighing whimsically against the audiences of both centers.

"They have an insufferable mania for applauding anti-climaxes," she chatted on. "Thus in a good comedy they will break in upon a good line and in their cheering lose the point of the scene. I really dislike comedies with jokes in them and of late it has become quite the thing to applaud epigrams, which is more than irritating. It gives you such a feeling of being a mouthpiece instead of a character."

She eyed Lionel for an instant and went on:

"For all I know you may be some atrocious critic in disguise seeking to capture me off my guard."

"Not at all," said Lionel.

"Or you may be some endowed reformer investigating the morals of the stage."

"Oh, no," said Lionel, smiling his prettiest.

"Ah, well," the actress sighed, "I will brave the possibilities and talk, avoiding, however, confession."

"Have you anything to confess?" murmured Lionel, his head giddy, his shoe clerk soul refusing to believe fully the transcendent realities about him. For the time being the strange lacerations which had proclaimed the presence of love were in abeyance. He was concerned only with his demeanor, his silences, his accent, his gesture. He would have opportunity to indulge his sentiments later.

"All conversation is a confession—of stupidity, some one has said," Elaine Diske answered. "But if one is going to confess, a stranger is the most logical confessor. To a stranger the most significant secrets necessarily have a casual and conventional air. Thus I might easily unburden myself of things which I would deny the ear of my most intimate friend, and you would really imagine I was merely, well merely talking."

"I hardly think so," said Lionel.

He sought to listen in detail to her words and derive some cue, some inspiration from them. But his thoughts floundered in their meaning and left him consciously void of any retort.

"I presume you are interested in the theater," went on Elaine. "Most intelligent men are. Stupid people concern themselves with life and spend their time quibbling furiously with human nature. Wise people attack the dramatists instead of God, find fault with third acts instead of factory conditions. You know what I mean?"

"Indeed," murmured Lionel, "but life also is important."

The sentence had a sapient ring in the actress' ears. She gazed fully upon the man, smiled openly and congratulated herself upon the decision she had made.

"You mean it has its importance," she countered. "I dislike speaking in capital letters. But I am always interested in what people I don't know think of things."

"Your interest in what I think then," spoke Lionel with a great slowness, "is not entirely flattering."

It was his masterpiece. Astounded at the sound of the remark he relapsed into a terrified silence. But again the actress regarded him with one of her genial glances.

An hour later both arose, Elaine to repair to her room, Lionel to his.

"I am staying here only for a week," Lionel spoke as they entered the elevator.

"I hope," answered Elaine, "that we will see each other again."

VI

At the shop the next day Lionel Pierce performed his labors with his brain whirling through the events of the previous evening. His eyes were continually upon the door and the only shadow in his elation was the fear that it might open and reveal the figure of Elaine Diske as he was seated upon his mahogany stool. The thought of his success was, however, wine to his

soul. Each hour he expanded, each hour he felt strange forces at work within him. His labors done, he hastened again to his new abode—the hotel—pausing for five minutes to eat at a lunch-counter en route.

Despite his relentless searching for the lady during the two hours after his arrival at the hotel, he yet managed to accost her when she appeared in the lobby with an air of detachment and nonchalance. She had recovered from her indisposition. She was hastening to the theater. He might, if he wished, call for her after the play. Indeed he would.

This second meeting was more successful than the first. Miss Diske sensed a certain mystery about her acquaintance and, during the short walk from the theater to the hotel, endeavored with subtlety to learn his place in life, his occupation. The lady's curiosity inspired Lionel with caution.

"I know," said she at length, "that it must have something to do with the war."

To this Lionel nodded a vague assent.

"Oh," she laughed, "I thought so from the first. I presume it would be unpatriotic of me to press you to reveal government secrets."

A stern note entered Lionel's voice.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but I am not in a—a position to tell."

"What a pity," she answered, "that I am not a German spy. In which case we could operate to some fetching dénouement. As it is, I will rest content in the belief that you are loaded down with new submarine plans and secret service codes and promise not to pick your pockets."

They entered the hotel this second time and supped in the Crystal dining-room. Sitting now opposite the distinguished creature, basking in her ease and radiance, with the after theater orchestra wailing melodiously behind the embankment of palms, Lionel's ego underwent its final expansion. He permitted the thrills of love to course down his spine and joggle his bosom.

The situation, as before, called forth unexpected qualities in his nature, unprecedented intelligences. Chiefly he contributed a poised and attentive ear to the talk of the actress, vouchsafing occasional remarks, the brevity of which gave them the air of staccato wisdoms. Mediocre and ordinarily stupid, a creature with neither ideas, manner, conceptions nor drollery, Lionel Pierce yet managed to create an atmosphere about him. Elaine, in fact, deemed him at the conclusion of their supper, a quaint and unusual personage. His silence she grew to attribute to weighty and preoccupying matters of state, to secrets which lay zealously guarded in his brain. Retiring to her rooms she murmured to herself:

"An unusually reticent man but very appreciative. He seems somehow starved. I wonder what ever led him to hunt me up? M-m. I know I've seen him somewhere—met him—under formal auspices. Well—"

Lionel Pierce throbbed with riotous emotions. Love was no longer the tenuously dreamy sensation he had known the first two days. It had become a definite and inspiring motive in his life. Back at his mahogany stool he contemplated the arched and silken feet of the young women, and stranger bewildering possibilities unfolded themselves in his thought. He had encountered and conducted successful conversations with the actress a half-dozen times. He had aroused an interest in her. He had informed her that certain mysterious things made it imperative that he remain a second week in Chicago. He had blundered adroitly into a condition of minor intimacy with her. Studying her sentences carefully, he had absorbed a small surface of culture, blossomed forth now and then with carefully rehearsed and annunciated remarks, squandered lavishly the hoardings of his seven years and grew to regard himself in an ennobling light, a light which promised to lead him into ways which made him dizzy to contemplate.

Why not? Had she not looked at

him with a peculiar, if quizzical, light in her eyes? Had she not laughed tremulously as they walked for the third time the vacant stretch of boulevard from the theater to her hotel? He would defer the plunge no longer. That evening, a few hours hence, he would make the attack, bluntly, directly. Aware that he was incapable of the adroit maneuverings to which the lady was undoubtedly used in such matters, he cannily decided upon a straightforward drive for her heart, and with this notion uppermost, his senses quivering, his eyes burning, and the taste of kisses, victory, almost upon his lips, Lionel Pierce walked with Elaine Diske close upon midnight the now familiar stretch of deserted boulevard toward the hotel.

The actress was, propitiously, in a mood of lassitude. Tired and with her ever present loneliness uppermost in her spirit, she looked forward to her return to New York with a wistful ennui. These were moments in which she felt herself ageing, became conscious of a seriousness in her outlook upon life which rendered the panorama of existence somewhat tedious.

Her thoughts centered pleasantly upon the man at her side. Breaking the silence which had fallen between them, she sighed, and placing her arm rather intimately in his, said:

"We have known each other long enough for you to tell me just where it was I met you before."

"Why do you insist on knowing?" Lionel inquired:

This recurring curiosity of hers always contributed a taste of disaster to the moment.

"I really don't know," she answered. "Except that I dislike being haunted. Faded memories are always such insistent ghosts in the brain. You must not tease me any longer, please. . ."

Lionel gulped. He had during the days built up a preposterous mystery about himself, a mystery involving generals, secret orders, despatches, cannon, battles and what not. There was an arc light ten feet away which cast a soft glow upon the night. His uneasi-

ness soon left him. In his brain circled the thought:

"Why not? I can have her. I'm no different than any of the other men who have made love to her."

Gently he squeezed her arm. The thing was hard getting underway. Even as he spoke her name visions of some grotesque failure crowded out visions of some miraculous success, and left him standing silent and confused.

The actress regarded him with serious eyes. Aware of the situation, she felt her heart move more rapidly and was glad. Ageing, perhaps, but not so much that she could remain docile in the current of a man's passion.

"Lionel," she whispered back to him.

They had progressed to the arc light. Why not? Whoever he was, he was a relief from the ennui into which she was sinking and perhaps something more. She was facing him, conscious of the almost desperate gleam in his eyes. As she moved gently toward him her foot encountered a loose shoelace.

"Oh, dear," she sighed softly, "my shoe's undone."

Lionel Pierce, reading something akin to surrender in the lovely face of the woman, hesitated. And there imagination left him. There the gifts which the gods had ironically ignited in his shoe clerk soul vanished.

"Permit me," he mumbled and bending with the grace of seven years practice, he knelt before the actress.

Somewhat piqued by the inane turn of events, Elaine extended her foot to her swain. Nevertheless a sense of weakness and willingness suffused her.

"If you please—dear Lionel," she murmured.

The words falling upon the shoe clerk's ear exploded like so many bombs in his consciousness. Victory! He had conquered. His eyes beheld for a moment without seeing, the exquisitely shod foot held toward him. Elaine was supporting herself with a hand upon the iron post of the arc light.

The moment of tumult in Lionel's soul passed and he found himself dazedly eyeing that most familiar of all

things in his world—the foot of a woman. Forces over which he had no control gripped him. Urgings and impulses rioted blindly through his being. The grain of mediocrity long denied popped to the surface.

Reaching forward with trembling hands toward the dangling laces Lionel Pierce drew a deep breath, and in a precise and modulated voice inquired: "What size, please, madam?"

There was a pause.

The horn of an automobile blew derisively as it swept by on the boulevard.

The words he had spoken reechoed in Lionel's ears and a cold sweat crept out upon his body.

He waited, not daring to move until suddenly a laugh arose in the night, keen, joyous and silvery. It was Elaine Diske laughing.

Lionel fumbled with the laces and then rose stiffly and bewilderedly to his feet. Still laughing, the actress confronted him.

"Oh, you funny man," she gasped, endeavoring to control herself. "I knew I had seen you before. I was certain of it. . . . And when you bent down to tie my laces. . . . oh, dear; oh, dear!"

Again the laugh floated upon the night.

"And when you asked, 'What size, madam?' . . . I remembered your voice. . . ."

Lionel Pierce stood dazed before the figure of the laughing woman. For the moment he was without power to move.

"The shoe clerk at the boulevard shop," blurted forth the beautiful Elaine Diske, overcome once more with the humor of life. "And I almost . . . the shoe clerk . . ."

With the words ringing in his brain, Lionel Pierce turned abruptly from the laughing woman and fled. Down the deserted stretch of boulevard pavement he sped, his feet beating out sharp echoes on the stones, his tie flapping abjectly about his shoulders, and the distant sound of laughter rising and falling, spurring him on to vaster locomotion.

A Little House

By Eleanor O'Malley

I

ISABEL SUYDAM and her husband and the Ford were all a surprise to Dora when they met her at the station. She had been a freshman when Isabel had graduated and got married, and she hadn't seen her since college, but during the five years she'd always had vague visions of Isabel's husband as a big, handsome fellow, and Isabel with a National at least.

Yet here was Isabel with that thickened, settled look, sitting in a Ford with what Dora called a God-fearing man. He had a long, narrow face and earnest, humourless eyes, and there were crow's-feet beside them and a deep nose-to-mouth crease that suggested a habit of laughing at his own jokes. She could imagine his smile in a Sunday School, saying: "Now, children, I'm sure we're all going to have a jolly time." And the children would look expectant, but not hopeful.

"Gracious, Dora, you've grown up!" Isabel was saying. "Room enough there? If not, I'll move the bundle. Fred can't get out till a later train."

"Fred?"

"He's Will's brother. We got him for you."

Dora looked at Will and pictured Fred, and she was conscious of a sinking sensation. She'd thought Isabel was going to be the giggling little dark-haired girl who'd left college to marry someone romantic, and that Will was going to be the romantic husband, and that this was going to be one of those nice country club week-ends that she liked. She remembered now Isabel's letter had said something about its being for a church benefit, this dance,

but everyone gave dances for charity when they couldn't think of any other excuse; and she had had the radiant picture of Isabel's romance so firmly fixed in her mind that that hadn't been enough to warn her.

The little wooden house was another surprise, and the fact that Isabel was going to share her room. Isabel plunged at once into the business of preparation for the evening, standing in a lisle union suit and a kimono as she rubbed quantities of sticky cold cream into her face. Not yet had she asked Dora the expected question and Dora was getting impatient for it. At last she broached the subject herself.

"Haven't seen any of my stuff around, have you?"

"What stuff?" Isabel looked quickly about the room, evidently under the impression Dora had mislaid her rouge.

"Oh, nothing." Yet she couldn't leave it at that. "I'm writing, though, you know. Some of it's under *nom de plumes*, but they're things that I used at school. I thought you might have seen, in the magazines."

"No, Will and I never read magazines. We don't seem to have the time. You must send me something you've written, though. I do remember now, you used to do poems about rain-drenched flowers and all the rest of it. Do you remember how we used to laugh about it at school?"

Dora's mouth shut tightly.

"Yes, I remember your laughing now. I'd almost forgotten."

"Hurry up, Dora. Will dresses so fast he'll soon be waiting."

Dora sat down heavily, and, undoing her spats, surveyed Isabel and her bedroom. . . Brass bed, rag rug, imitation

ivory set on an oak dresser, an old-fashioned Mother and Child print, and some framed verses about Keep Smiling.

This was what had come of that radiant expectancy of Isabel's. Romance had resolved itself into having to kiss that lantern-jawed husband, those tasteless, conjugal kisses. Every night he'd come home and they'd have dinner on that square table with the fern, downstairs. Isabel had only one maid, so she had to think of whether the potatoes were well done, and if there were enough Dutch Cleanser for the bathroom, and all that. This was married life. The adventure had gone, and things got stodgy. . . .

"Who are you in love with now, Dora? You were the greatest one for violent attachments." Isabel, powdering the back of her neck with a flat-flabby puff was making the conversation of a hostess.

"Not in love with anyone . . . any man, that is. I love writing too much." She'd resented that about the rain-drenched flowers.

"Wait till Mr. Right comes along," said Isabel. "He'll change all that."

"He won't," almost viciously, thinking of Will.

There were voices downstairs then that sounded like Will replying to himself in a slightly higher key, and Isabel, breathing in deeply to get a petticoat hook fastened around her waist, stopped and pricked up her ears.

"That must be Fred," she said. "I didn't think he'd be able to get out here this early."

She managed the petticoat at last, then getting into a purple evening gown, very careful of her hair, she drummed on the dresser with her fingers while Dora snapped the fasteners. At last, with a final dab with the powder puff and an excited whirl in front of the mirror, she had gone tripping downstairs.

Dora sighed again as she slipped off her dressing gown and took up her green frock. (It was not excited preparation that made her dawdle, though

Isabel evidently thought it was.) She hated the prospect of going down and plunging into an evening of homely small town women and Wills and Freds in "dress suits."

"Ooo-hoo! Dora!" Isabel's voice up the stairs. "Fred says he likes you just the way you are. Do hurry. We'll all be late."

Listlessly Dora took up her fan and her cloak and went stomping down.

Fred was a surprise. He was tall and well built, and far from the eagerness she had rather dreaded, he looked as if he'd probably expected to be bored with her. He was curiously like Will, a Will vastly improved. His face wasn't as long as Will's and, though his eyes were the same color, they had a half bashful self-assurance, the attractive look the Prince of Wales has so successfully cultivated. You couldn't tell yet whether Fred's eyes were going to be humourless or not when he was Will's age. She liked best the shape of his head, well formed, with a square forehead and closely-cropped black curls. Somehow, looking at him, in a flash, she saw the wonderful man Isabel had left school to marry.

In the car she sat closer to him than she did to Isabel.

The club looked like a bungalow outside, and inside was one long wooden room half filled with tables laid for dinner. The lights were dim since the decorations were blue and gold lanterns, and Dora didn't care much for the paper streamers hung about everywhere. The people were just what she had expected, largely dowagers in tight corsets and with husbands, whom they watched whenever they gravitated toward that girl in scarlet. Everyone stood around awkwardly, glancing in the direction of the tables, while Isabel flitted about like a little wren making introductions. It was a relief when Fred turned on the phonograph and came toward her with his arms stretched out.

She liked the feel of him. He was hard and springy, and his shoulder was just the right height. He was more interested in her now, and when he

looked into her face she discovered his tight mouth went up engagingly at one side when he smiled. The resemblance between him and Will slowly faded.

"Do you come to these things often?" she asked wonderingly.

"Fairly. You see, father and mother used to get them up, and they liked us to."

"But you don't live out here?"

"Oh, yes I do. With Will and Isabel. I'm moving into New York next week, though. Commuting's too much of a good thing, after the daily grind."

"What do you do?"

"I? I'm budding forth as a lawyer."

He was the only good-looking man there. That was the reason, she told herself, why she wanted him to like her and to stay with her. If he didn't, she'd be bored. Yet when at last he was saying: "You've got the *deepest* dark eyes I ever saw, and with those lashes, and very white skin. . . . You're awfully pretty, close," she was astounded to find herself blushing.

II

DORA's apartment in New York was more comfortable than most women's apartments. It was a long, high-ceilinged place, and the gray walls and Whistler etchings were austere enough, but she had Oriental rugs, a wide, mulberry velvet divan, big, low armchairs into which one sank and didn't want to get up, and primmer chairs with tall backs and ears. There were soft satin cushions in dull colors, a baby grand with a fine piece of silk embroidery, and a quaint mahogany desk and little tables and footstools. On the table was a little tree in a blue bowl, laden with tiny oranges to add a note of colour.

Fred thought in the light of the tall lamp by the piano that Dora's apartment was the most beautiful place he had ever seen; but Fred had been living with Isabel and her husband till he came to New York, and now he was stopping at a second-rate hotel.

He had formed the habit of coming up to tea of an afternoon and, as this

habit grew, Dora's teas got to be over earlier. After a time Fred generally stayed until anyone else who might be there had gone, and they sat in the semi-darkness or in the light of the tall lamp he liked, and talked.

Sometimes they talked about law. Fred had a great deal of respect for the law; he was sure he was in the right profession. She was surprised that he didn't like New York. The real life, he said, was in small towns where you could know a few people. She gathered he thought Isabel and Will were an ideal married couple, and their town an ideal place for a young married couple, with the church crowd and the club and everything.

When they talked about her writing he'd get paternal and smile indulgently, but he would listen to her talk of the wonderful things she was going to write some day, and sometimes he'd try planning with her to please her.

"Ever try any success stories, Dora? They always go well."

A frown came in the middle of the glow.

"N-n-no. I never did. I couldn't do them, I don't believe. It's got to be people I can see clearly, and believe are real, and all. And I don't know. . . . Most success I see isn't dramatic. It's grinding and greedy grubbiness, the thing success stories are about. I can't do home-town yokels who make a fortune out of a patent shoe horn or something and then marry the girl they want. . . . I never knew any."

"They're popular, though. And you can work a good moral into 'em."

She stopped picking dead leaves off the orange tree and went and stood in front of the fire, looking down at him.

Fred said a lot of things that would have irritated her in anyone else, but sprawling there gracefully on the lounge, his blue eyes following her about, there was something about him that overcame any vague irritation. The fire formed a halo all round Dora, her reddish hair and the slim black velvet dress.

Suddenly he got up, and put his arms

around her, very awkwardly and gently. She'd known it was coming for a long time, but she could feel her heart beating.

"Please, Dora."

"No—no."

"Yes," a whisper, and his lips were an inch away.

"No—no!" . . . O Fred!"

It was a nice kiss, hard and close-lipped, and just lingering enough. It made her feel very tender toward him.

"Fred, you mustn't, dear."

"I do love you, though, ol' thing. Ever since I first saw you, I've wanted you. . . I want you for mine, always . . . ever an' ever." He had a boy's way of rubbing his forehead against her cheek.

"No, but you mustn't. It'll hurt horribly when we bust up."

"Not going to bust up."

"Yes we are. It can't last, and we'll hurry things up if we aren't careful." She reached back and switched on the light. "Let's read something—something sort of vigorous and rain-in-the-fade. Poetry, eh?"

"Look, Dora."

"No, don't. You sit back on the divan, an' I'll have this chair. That's right. . . Now."

When he had gone at last she still felt flushed and excited. Something inside her was singing, and all she could see was Fred's face smiling his one-sided smile, looking at her with anxious wistfulness, his profile with the straight nose, head thrown back as he blew smoke up to the ceiling. . .

She ought not to see him any more. They had been slowly leading up to this, and now he wanted to marry her. She didn't want to get married. She loved him now, as much as Isabel had once loved Will. But Isabel's life would make her wretched. She couldn't stand what Fred wanted, a suburban home with a baby or so soon, and definite visions of making them lawyers like their Dad. She wanted glorious, uncertain, adventurous things—things she could write about. She did love Fred; he was good-looking and thrilling. But

writing was a deeper sort of emotion, very much more permanent and more satisfying. She couldn't give it up to settle down to married life in the suburbs with Fred. She'd have to say good-bye.

Yet when Fred came the next evening, she didn't say good-bye. He didn't give her the chance. His arms went round her hungrily as soon as he came in, and his kiss was less hard and close-lipped and very much more intoxicating. She found herself holding close to him, her cheek against his chest, her arms tight round the slenderness of his back.

"Oh Dora. . . Dora, my dear!"

"Fred, we mustn't."

"I've thought of you every minute. . . . Couldn't do a thing all day. . . I do love you, I do. . ." His forehead rubbing her cheek again; it saved showing his shy, warm face. . . "An' now tonight I've got that fool of a dinner to go to. But we'll have tomorrow evening, won't we?"

She was astonished to find herself still clinging, delaying his going by a little pretext of brushing his coat; and then she was frightened. She was afraid she was on the verge of marrying Fred, and she knew she didn't want to. This was something very beautiful and bright and very fleeting. She didn't want to be dazzled to blindness—and then wake up in a suburban home. She'd have to run away, or try to fall in love with someone else or something. She couldn't write lately; it was no use trying that.

Winnie Galloway and her husband were at a hotel about thirty miles out, and Loring Whiteside was there too, and there were golf and riding and an indoor swimming pool.

She picked up the telephone and called long distance before the memory of Fred's kiss could make her change her mind.

III

Two days afterward she woke up in the leafy air of the country and the clean smell of white paint of the country

hotel. She had breakfast in bed, looking out of the window between bites of hot buttered toast. The gravel drive curved around a circular flower-bed with early crocuses in purple and yellow as a border and in the center a tall fountain that glistened and splashed.

Loring Whiteside rode in soon on a big bay horse, straight and erect. He looked tightly buttoned, as though his clothes were much too small. She jumped out of bed and began dressing quickly, to catch him before he got away.

Loring liked her well enough to put up with her golf for a morning, but after she had lost the fourth ball in the rough he suggested sitting down beside one of the greens and talking.

Dora sat beside him listlessly, disheartened because there was no thrill at all in him. There was no thrill in anyone but Fred. Loring's neck was thick and red and bulging over the back of his collar, his cheeks were faintly mottled and his ears looked old. Fred's ears were pink, and his cheeks were firm; she remembered how his hair grew at the back of his neck, tiny hairs with an inclination to be curly even when clipped close.

But she was going to like Loring and be interested in him; he'd be the kind of man for her to marry, if ever she did, cynical and tolerant and hungry for excitement.

"I don't see why you don't do something, Loring," she said. "No man ought to be content just to live on his income and give no return to the world when others have to work so hard for so little."

"Since when? . . ." he started, but stopped. "I know. I get periods when I think I'll go in for honest toil, but there are so few things I'm good for, and the city's impossible the year round."

"Oh, that's no excuse. You're good for a lot of things. You could study law, even." Then, she found herself saying, "As for staying in New York, there're some wonderful suburbs. People laugh at commuters and all that,

but it's as wholesome a life as there is." The words came somehow in spite of herself.

He let out the smoke of his cigarette slowly, and looked at her sidewise, then he began laughing. Dora surveyed him coldly.

"He was a wholesome country boy!" he said oratorically. "He studied law. Though Flatbush was not . . ."

Dora scrambled quickly to her feet.

"Let's get back," she said. "Luncheon must be nearly ready by this time."

"Why, I'm sorry, Dora. Forgive me. I'd no idea there was someone—"

"Oh hush! Forgive you for what? It's just that I hate people trying to be funny when I'm serious."

Back in her room she was angry with herself. Here she'd come away to forget Fred, and the first man she met could tell—

It was no use. No man could cure her of loving Fred. It would have to be something else. Instinctively she turned to writing. She wouldn't go downstairs at all this afternoon. She'd stay in her room and write.

Yet Fred crept into that. Before she knew it she had written the opening lines of a "success" story, the kind of story Fred liked, the kind that would make him proud of her. Her characters didn't come naturally, and they didn't develop and talk of their own accord. She had to do things for them, and when the clockwork didn't run smoothly enough she gave it a rather obvious shove. It was hard work because there was so little pleasure in it, but so long as there was no painstaking care, no searching for a fugitive word, it went very fast. By the end of the afternoon she had it finished and had sent it off.

She admitted as much to Winnie after dinner as they sat in the dimly lighted lounge. Winnie thought it was dreadful.

"You'll be sorry some day, Dora, slaving your life away like that. You're only young once, and in a few years you won't have the chances you have now. What you want to do is marry a nice man. Loring's awfully fond of you,

He'd let you write if you wanted to."

"Let me write!"

Dora was tired and the afternoon had been so tedious she couldn't think of any answer to Winnie's sensible advice. She knew there was some sort of an answer deep down in her consciousness, but whatever it was, it was no use telling it to Winnie. Winnie passed on to more enjoyable topics.

"My husband's so funny," she said. "He told me in the city today, there were two men. . . ."

That was it! Winnie was getting most of her impressions second-hand just as much as Isabel was. She sat here all day and played bridge or knitted or walked or played golf, and her husband strolled in in the evening and told her what was happening. Dora didn't want that yet. She wouldn't want to get married, even if Fred weren't small town. She wanted first-hand experiences . . . and writing.

She hadn't noticed it at first but, now that the talking was quieting down, she heard the orchestra playing. There over in the corner among the palms. It really was soothing here, with the soft lights and the women in pale dresses against the dark tapestry furniture.

Dora listened lazily. The violin wasn't quite as good as the rest. They stopped slowly, and there was perfunctory applause, mostly from the men. The violin and the cello looked defiant, as though informing everyone that that was all they got for a time; but the piano went on playing softly, alone. She liked that man; he was playing for himself, because he wanted to.

It could hardly be distinguished from the subdued buzz of conversation at first, but then it rose slowly, faintly, louder.

She leaned back and closed her eyes. It didn't matter whether it was the "Liebestraum" or what it was; it was something singing just to her. That yearning wistfulness came with it, the feeling that came with flowers, and poems, and—Fred. It climbed and climbed. She felt she couldn't stand the delay of the climax; her hands

clenched, and her throat was tight. When at last it came tumbling down and then kept falling and falling regretfully, there were tears under her lashes.

"I told you you oughtn't to have worked like that this afternoon. Look, Loring. She's sitting there falling asleep."

"I know," said Dora getting up. "I think I'll chase up to bed. Good-night, you two. See you tomorrow."

In bed, it was all clear at last. Fred was beauty, just as much as music and flowers and poems. He would fade into Suburbia and a face like his brother's, just as music dies away and flowers wither and beauty of a poem dulls with constant repetition. But one didn't throw flowers away and shut ears to music and eyes to poems just because beauty couldn't last forever. It was only in marriage that you'd have to cling to the dead remains. But wouldn't she rather have Fred for a little while than Loring forever? That would be beauty, just to love him for a little while, then say good-bye.

She was glad she was going back on Friday. She never ought to have come away, but now she knew.

IV

WHEN she walked through the gates at Grand Central Station, she thought at first she must be mistaken. It wasn't only that she hadn't expected him, but he didn't see her at first, and he had a stolid, unimaginative look on his face, much like Will's. But as soon as he smiled the one-sided smile and started toward her, it all came back.

"How on earth did you know?"

"I telephoned you out there—couldn't wait any longer—an' they told me you'd gone in on this train. You don't mind, do you?"

"Mind!" She squeezed his arm.

"Let's go and have dinner somewhere."

"No, let's go home. I telephoned Ernestine to have something ready for me, and I want to wash and change this horrible suit. That was the slowest train I was ever on in my life."

The fire was lighted and the table laid at home, and it was all very cosy and comfortable with the glow on the silver and the bright little oranges on the tree. They lingered over the coffee with a subtle sense of something pending.

She didn't glance at the mail till Ernestine had cleared everything away and gone, then, on the top of the pile in the hotel envelope was the story she'd written to make Fred proud of her. Even that magazine had rejected the wretched thing. Fred saw her face as she crumpled the rejection slip and threw it in the fire, and his arms were protecting.

"What do you care, sweetheart? Fred loves you."

"No . . . but I ought never to have written that trash."

"Aw, what of it? Writing don't matter."

"Yes, but it does, dear. I know it sounds silly, but I do love it. It's something so very dear and valuable, so close. It's—almost part of yourself, understanding things you say that no one else can understand. It's—it's almost like a lover, a wonderful one that'll be with you always and love you more and more, if you keep on loving it. Yes, it is a lover. . . ."

He was stroking her cheek.

"You've got the softest skin, darling"; then, jerking back obligingly to the subject, "Yes, I s'pose so. I've got a cousin who's bugs about art too, only his bug is painting. He does these dribbly water colors, an' if they're not stuck right in the middle of the wall next visit, he's off you for life."

His blue eyes were unconscious of having said anything that might hurt, and the corner of his mouth went up encouragingly in a smile. She smiled back, tender and possessive.

"What's my Fred 'bugs' about?"

He held her suddenly tighter and the smile vanished.

"Three guesses," he whispered.

"Can't guess."

"Want me to tell you?" A husky voice against her neck.

"N-no."

"Look, Dora. You know I love you, and I do want you . . . always. We'll have a little house. It'll have to be a little one because we couldn't use your money. . . . But I'd be so doggone happy. I know I would. . . . A lawyer needs a wife if he's going to get anywhere."

She couldn't tell whether it was his heart or her own that she could feel thumping. Her head was swimming. She'd have wanted him to ask her this first, and something inside her was saying, "Yes, Yes!" but she mustn't listen to that.

He thought at first she meant yes because she didn't draw away, but when he bent her face up to kiss her, she opened her eyes.

"So much better not, dear."

"You mean—you mean you don't want to?" He let go of her but she held on, and soon she felt his arms again, tighter than ever, as though he were afraid she was going to melt away.

"Fred . . . I wish . . . It's not you. . . . I love you, I really do. . . . now . . . but I don't want to get married . . . not to anyone."

"Oh! I didn't know. So tonight's good-bye?"

"It needn't be, precious."

"Oh yes! It's got to. I can't be friends any more—I love you too much. You're everything I want—beauty and brains and character and everything—I never knew there was anyone like you—I'm just crazy to have you forever. Oh Dora, don't say no. I know I've not got much now, but I've counted on your saying yes. You made me believe you would. I know you'd be happy."

"No dear, we wouldn't be happy together for long."

"All right then. I can't see you any more. It's too dangerous."

She was still holding herself close to him and she tried to say something but the words wouldn't come. It had all seemed so simple out there in the country with that music running through her head but, with Fred's serious eyes on her, she couldn't express it. At last, in a whisper:

"It's *my* danger, isn't it?" she said.

"Not entirely Dora. There's my family an' friends, an' all that. The law—God's and man's—allows a man one wife, an' I was raised pretty strict. Besides, this way you interrupt my work. I can't expect to get on in business thinking of you all the time. It's just a perpetual state of being stirred up. No, unless you feel like loving me forever and I can have you always, selfishly, for my work's sake, I've got to say good-bye."

"No one loves this way forever, Fred, the way we love now. And as for law, law's the scales and the five finger exercises. You can't play music with those. Beauty's the big thing, dear, and beauty never lasts long. It'd be too sustained, loving this way forever. But now, while it is beautiful, don't let's throw it away. Don't let's say good-bye."

He bent and looked into her face and his blue eyes contained a faint horror.

"You don't believe in free love an' all that awful stuff, do you?"

She definitely stopped clinging.

"All love's free. It's the poor imitation that's not. And people who gabble about free love only understand the imitation."

She was about to turn away, but then his hand touched hers. In a moment she was in his arms again.

"Dora, don't dear. I can't give you up. I just can't. You do love me, I know you do. You're going to marry me, too, aren't you—aren't you?"

"No, sweetheart, I don't want to. We needn't say good-bye, though, unless you don't care for me any more." Then, as he was letting go of her, "Look, Freddie. We're both at an awful tension tonight. Don't let's decide about the good-bye this minute. Let's put it off till tomorrow. Come to tea, and we'll make up our minds."

"No, it's good-bye, Dora. . . Or perhaps I will come up just once again, just to say good-bye. I'll stop in for a few minutes, about five. Good-night. . . I'll be in about five. . . But it's good-bye."

V

As soon as she woke up the next morning, she tried to feel glad that it was going to be the last day of Fred. Ever since she'd met him the days had been full of this queer restlessness. She'd accomplished nothing at all. Tomorrow she'd start writing in earnest, making up for lost time. It *wasn't* that she was going to see him today that made her unable to write; it was just that she didn't feel like it.

She wanted everything to be very pretty for their good-bye, so that the memory of this room he'd liked so much—and of her—would always remain beautiful. At three o'clock she started to play the phonograph to while away the time, but it was "*Depuis le jour*" and when she came to "*Ah que je suis heureuse!*" she stopped the thing abruptly.

When the clock struck five she had a dreadful fear he wasn't coming. He didn't care any more, now she'd said that she didn't want to marry him, and he wasn't even going to say good-bye. She wouldn't ever see him again, ever; her Fred, whose mouth went up at one corner when he smiled, whose blue eyes were so wistful. She'd never feel how hard the muscles of his back were, his forehead rubbing her cheek. . .

From five o'clock to four minutes past five was several hours, and then the bell rang.

"Freddie! I thought you weren't coming."

"I almost didn't. Passed the house twice, if you can think of anything crazier."

"What'd you do that for?"

"Why, it's no use, Dora. It'd have been more sensible to say good-bye last night. Anyhow, good-bye now, dear," holding out his hand. "I'm not going to kiss you good-bye; I know where that'd land us."

There was Fred's cool, firm hand extended, and the minute's duration of a handshake between her and a life without him. She ignored the hand, and went over and stood close to him, but

even when she took hold of his lapels, his arms stayed at his sides.

"You can't leave your Dora like that."

"Oh yes I can. Better'n leaving her any other way."

She put her hands behind his neck, where she could feel the close-cropped curly hair, and pressed her cheek tight against his rough coat. She could hear his heart beating, and neither of them spoke. Presently—she knew they would—his arms went round her tightly.

"Good-bye, then, Dora."

"No. No, no! I don't want to say good-bye."

"Well, look, then. You've got to marry me. Want to?"

"N-n—I— Yes, I do." It came to her suddenly, and she hadn't expected to say it, but once it was out she thought

that that was what she'd wanted all along.

"Oh dear, dear. I knew you would. I know I'm going to be happy, too, I love you. We'll have a little house. . ."

"An' a Ford?"

"Yes, and—"

"An' babies?" very softly. "Little boys with dark curls an' blue eyes an' crooked smiles, and they'll grow up to be lawyers like their Daddy."

"And little girls like you, sweetheart, beautiful little dark things that'll some day make Shakespeare look like a fool."

She paused in the middle of kissing his cheek.

"No. The Dora juniors won't do that. They'll expect to and then a handsome youth'll come along, and the first thing they know they'll have a little house, an' . . . poor little devils!"



Twilight

By David Morton

INVISIBLE builders, laboring with dim hands,
Have reared a shadowy world of earth and sky,
Swung windless doors on unimagined lands,
And shaped a burning star to light them by.
So noiselessly those hidden hammers smite,
To mould the fine perfection of an hour,
The beaten-silver moon comes on the night
Like the slow, gradual, blossoming of a flower.

Makers of beauty, building at a mood,
They leave a world of faltering lights behind,
Spreading a grave and stirless solitude,
A trailing dusk that gathers through the mind,
Till thought, itself, is still as twilights are:
Brooding and shadowed beauty . . . and a star.



Iron Infallibility

By Major Owen Hatteras

THE older I grow the less I believe in the immutability of natural laws. Every one of them seems to fail now and then; to every one there are apparent exceptions. But there is at least one natural law that has so far never failed to my knowledge, and so I yield it my unqualified allegiance. It is the law to the effect that the contents of a special delivery letter are never worth reading—that the epistle which forces itself raucously upon one just as one is sitting down to dinner or dozing off to sleep or inserting the key into the lock of the concrete vault in the cellar—that the epistle which thus intrudes upon happiness, accompanied by a youth who smells of bad cigarettes and shoves an exigent receipt-book under one's nose, is always some garrulous banality that might just as well have come by freight.



To Beauty

By Paul Tanaquil

BEAUTY, be close to me, go by my side
Constant through life; I need you most of all.
I will be true to you, and where you call
I will obey you, Beauty. Oh, abide
Deep in me; keep me young; let my dreams ride
Like clouds over the earth—I fear the thrall
Of knowledge and satiety, the gall
Of senses jaded or of joys denied.

Always remain beside me; be my friend;
Let me discover you with wondering eyes
In the most simple things: a swaying tree,
A flower that the gentle breezes bend,
A lark trilling its joy in the June skies,
The steadfast hills and the eternal sea . . .

The Seasons and Her Ashes

By Paul Eldridge

WHEN he returned from the cremation with the urn containing the ashes of his beloved wife, he thought, as he sobbed:

"I shall make of these ashes a pillow. I shall sleep upon it the rest of my life. Her dear body shall be with me every night—always."

It was mid-winter, and the earth was covered with snow and ice. The wind howled ceaselessly as though maddened with the toothache. The trees, like pessimistic philosophers, stood, black, and silent, and hollow-hearted.

Meanwhile he placed the urn near his bed, and for a week found it impossible to sleep. He lost several pounds in weight; heavy, black rings encircled the lower lids of his eyes; he could not eat; he could not work; his head, grown immensely big and light, floated in the air.

"It is not well for me to keep the ashes near my bed. I shall place them on my desk in the library. There her dear soul shall permeate my thoughts as a subtle and beautiful perfume. I shall order a magnificent urn, and paint upon it in golden letters: *Here lies the greatest treasure of a bereaved husband*. Or perhaps I shall order a lamp, and place the ashes within it. The light shall be mellow as her gentle spirit. Not a light, really, but a smile—a tender smile from the Great Beyond."

The Winter was ill with Time. His iron grip relaxed. The snow melted, and rushed with big, muddy feet to the gutters. About the tiny twigs of trees there lurked vague recollections of little birds with very thin legs; green leaves with sharp edges; white, soft breezes.

The urn occupied too great a space

upon the desk. He needed much room when he read or wrote. The desk had always been too small, anyway. "I shall put the urn meanwhile into this wicker-basket, which the dear soul used for dirty laundry, so that it may not break or spill. And it is best probably in the spare-room. It is not right to flaunt one's pain before friends. Pain is vanity. A strong man should crush pain, should step upon it with a heavy heel!"

Spring appeared suddenly like a breeze from a great journey. It perched on trees, and there were buds. It tickled the throats of the birds, and there was song. It ran with beautiful silver feet upon the ground, and there was grass. And within the bereaved husband's heart it sighed, and there was lonesomeness.

From a far state a very dear friend—a second cousin, indeed, came, and brought along her daughter—a slim, fair-haired, blue-eyed daughter. He opened wide the door of the spare-room, and begged the ladies to own everything within it—"except—this wicker-basket"—he smiled sadly—"I shall take it down to the cellar—it's an encumbrance here. The flame rises high, but the ashes fall to the ground—is it not so, my dear friends?"

On his right shoulder he carried the basket, as he descended the narrow steps to the cellar. Then he placed it upon a broad shelf on which formerly the dear dead one used to place jars filled with delicious preserves—strawberries, and tiny oranges, and cherries. . . .

And here was Summer—dashing in upon the world like a Spanish dancer, with color and bells and little drumlets! And within the heart of the bereaved

husband it laughed, and there was a tumult of love. And the slim, fair-haired, blue-eyed daughter sat upon his knees, and played with his face. . . .

"Sentiment is beautiful, but sentimentality is cheap and unbecoming of a man. What does an urn filled with ashes mean—save a vulgar display of one's former pain? The weaklings suffer; the strong rejoice. Life! Life!"

So he descended into the cellar, and opened the wicker-basket, which was upon the shelf where once were jars filled with delicious preserves—cherries, and tiny oranges and strawberries—and out of it he took the urn filled with ashes.

It was a beautiful night. The moon, a silver lantern, swayed gently in the winds, showing to the immortal ones

the glory of the Earth. The bereaved husband walked slowly along the shore of the lake, carrying in his left arm the urn.

Suddenly, there was a great splash, and the gods that watched saw many, many circles upon the water running to catch one another; and the fish at the bottom felt something heavy fall among them, and were scared.

"Go, my dear, from all eternity to all eternity! Make part of the Great Cosmos unhindered! Be one with the waters and the winds! Seek Nirvana!"

Autumn, shabby, prodigal, returned, with a half-hearted whistle, and a withered rose. . . .

In the spare-room, the wicker-basket was filled with dirty laundry.



A Song Afterward

By Grace Hazard Conkling

NOW we shall be apart.
The room that holds the moon
Like a big gold-fish bowl,
You'll have forgotten soon.

Our walks you will forget,
And flowers we watched fall,
And how the least word sang,
Turned magical.

I have not learned it yet,
This lesson that I say
Over and over again
To my heart all day,

And patiently all night,
Trying to teach my heart . . .
Now you have gone away!
Now we shall be apart!

The Illegitimate Genius

By Paul Brooks

I

ESTHER ROSENAUER, having achieved a triumph as the heroine of Eugene Dekker's first great tragedy, decided that the wearisome myth of respectability might just as well be dispensed with. She therefore took the public into her confidence and exhibited with all maternal pride her cherubic five-year-old son. The rosy Armand Rosenauer, already a full-fledged epicurean, with merry black eyes and a tight little paunch that he loved to thump, was a triumphant specimen of illegitimacy, if ever there was one. One could tell to look at him that the accident of base birth would never be a handicap for him. He was just a frolicsome male whelp; the world would soon become, to his way of thinking, merely a background for his own pranks. What under the sun could forebears—visible or invisible—matter? Animals don't brood about their fathers; ranging through the forest on the search for food or mates, they do not pause to sight the lack of a paternal discipline. Neither would Armand, when his predatory instincts quickened.

The more one thought over the child's future, indeed, the more blessed seemed his lot: for here was a beast who would never be forced to nose out his food and yet who would never lose his freedom being reduced to a flaccid domestic pet or to a prisoner behind cage-bars. His mother could be counted on to replenish his paunch and to ask no questions when he scampered off to the hunt.

Fortunate Armand!—with no father at all and with a mother who must suf-

fer the penalty of her own indiscretions by keeping mum on the subjects of morality and decency. Any attempt at restraint on Esther Rosenauer's part would be farcical, ridiculous; when one caught Armand's jolly eyes, one realized he'd soon appreciate the fact.

By the time the wicked Armand had completed his theoretical education in the world's ways and had begun his really active career, Esther's face had become international. Her greatness was accepted in all docility both by Europe and America; nobody lifted a complaining voice at Esther's arrogant boast that she had snatched the laurel wreath from the head of the ageing Bernhardts and had planted it firmly on her own white brow. Sardou and Sarah were spoken of everywhere as the giants of a past generation; Rosenauer and her pet playwright—Eugene Dekker—had things their own way at present. The clap-trap machinery of the "Toscas" and "Fédoras" brought a pitying smile to the lips of theatre-goers; the insane transports, the downright mad gibbering of the Frenchman's heroines had been thrilling in their day—their sensational, barbarous day.

It was no longer, however, the period of torture-chambers, grotesque head-dresses and tawny manes. Dekker's courtesans were women—suffering, subtle creatures—not Maenads drunk with blood and lust. The plays of the astounding Eugene were sombre tragedies in the true, immortal sense. Aristotle's words about "purging man's soul by fear and pity" were bandied about by young and old alike. The alliance of Rosenauer and Dekker made history fast. Future generations would inevi-

tably read of them in the magazines featuring "celebrated affinity" articles.

Of course, great and revered though he was, Dekker played second fiddle in the combination; that is always the fate of the playwright who writes for a particular actress. Esther was the sun, as it were; Eugene's was the borrowed light.

The fact that Dekker ruled like a just and jealous God over the rehearsals of his plays made no difference; the public didn't care a rap about what went on in the mysterious weeks before opening nights. True, it was pleasant to hear of the bickerings, the arguments and the rows; when Eugene slapped Rosenauer's face, the sound echoed from one end of New York to the other. A postponed première always gave rise to gossip: the playwright had insulted the actress before the assembled company and the two had split, weren't even speaking; or, Rosenauer had fallen short in her part and Dekker was hunting for another protagonist; or—oh, hundreds of conjectures!

People did realize that Eugene coached Esther exhaustively, relentlessly, savagely, that she was just so much putty in his hands. Still, they continued to give the woman their more fervent allegiance. That was but natural. Who, with a goddess of heroic proportions before his eyes—a creature six feet tall, with limbs so massive and straight that they would have been fit props for a Grecian temple, with arms so long they seemed to encircle the entire auditorium, with eyes suggestive of black velvet pools full of unearthly lights (as Dekker himself, in a mood of poetical frenzy, put it, "craters of slime under the moon, where water-snakes dart and give out phosphorescent gleams"),—who, with such a being filling his vision, could give a thought to an under-sized, nervous, rather horrible man in the offing? There was no doubt about it: Rosenauer's glory far transcended Dekker's.

Armand, arriving at man's estate, took his mother's fame with equanimity. Great? Of course she was great. She

had given the name of Rosenauer an abiding renown—he granted it freely. He wasn't, however, planning to let it go at that. Heaven forbid! Genius in families should reach its finest flower at least a generation later than the period of its first blossoming. Too many men fall short because, from the cradle, they are overshadowed by a parent's celebrity; isn't it true that a big reputation acts like a very worm in the bud on the descendants of the fortunate idol?

Armand hadn't a doubt of this. History was rich in lamentable examples of the withering effect upon family trees of the excessive glare focussed on a single blossom. *He* would not allow himself to be blasted by the white light he had been bathed in from infancy. His was a sublime mission. The only weakness in his scheme lay in the fact that he was quite willing to achieve a fame so overwhelming as to result in the utter ruin of his own progeny. Naturally, he never thought of that; in fact, he never thought of anything but himself. He was just *there* for the world's profit; if the danger to his children had ever occurred to him, he would have shrugged it away blithely. Every line weakens in the end; it's after all the easiest thing in the world to put your finger on the biggest, most exotic flower a given tree is capable of producing and to moralize sadly, "When *your* priceless beauty has faded and breathed out all its sweetness, we must accept a weakening, a decline; it would be flying in the face of Providence to demand another glory like unto this."

Armand felt that in ten years' time the world would be musing in some such pretty words, would be putting a finger on the loveliest blossom the Rosenauer tree could produce. Esther Rosenauer wouldn't be the one apostrophized, either.

Armand's conceit didn't detract from his charm; it sat well upon him. He had been brought up like an absolute monarch; moreover, he had exercised a power that no other infant sovereign had ever boasted. He just ruled untrammelled—that was all; no wise re-

gent, usurping the throne without appearing to do so, held him in check. Esther demanded no queen-mother privileges; she was content to bend the knee in all humility before her regal son.

It was no wonder Armand considered himself in all ways the superior of his renowned mother; she had herself taught him this lesson. Esther, a demi-goddess on the boards, was in private life simply a large, common woman redeemed by fame, fortune and Eugene Dekker's tutelage from a humdrum peasant existence. With her baby, she had been ever undignified and unimpressive. She would make herself ridiculous in the effort to win a smile from him. Her maternal affection had from the first betrayed her; she would kneel before the child, shout out her love, roll over and over on the floor at his feet. Slapping his little body vigorously, while he reclined at ease in his bath-tub, she would babble most vulgar and unbecoming things.

Esther had never been able to shock the little boy. Right from the start, however, the chap had been bored by her mauulings and her immodest jests. Here was a daughter of the plough—his attitude implied—a big, clumsy, wearisome thing to be put in her place with all possible gentleness. So Armand had genially snubbed his mother—both when he was a baby and when he was a boy; he would continue to snub her till she died.

Never in a sullen, ill-tempered way, though! His nature was incapable of a cloud. He ignored her, to be sure; but he did it, as he did everything else, in a jolly, sunny, wonderfully sweet and gracious manner. While he looked over her head, the ingratiating, infectious smile on his lips compelled a response equally affable.

II

ON his twenty-first birthday, Armand elaborately casual, remarked, "Mother, dear, I want fifty thousand dollars. I've made up my mind to get

to work. New York needs a season of Shakespeare, with young, good-looking actors and all the rest of it. It's in me to do Romeo and Hamlet. It'll be just a loan you understand; you'll get the money back with interest."

Esther, breakfasting in bed, dropped her coffee cup into its saucer with a clatter. Her big black eyes grew round with wonder. Then she burst into a rumbling, contralto laugh. Her son, perched on the counterpane at her side, felt the mattress shake beneath him from the explosive mirth. Esther's massive contours seemed to expand, to become distended under the coverings, quite as if her laughter were growing bigger and bigger within her. She looked for all the world like a female Boreas, puffing out her store of merriment in great gusts.

"My baby!" she cried, "My little roly-poly! Armand, my love, I could split my sides thinking of it!"

And she was off again, as good as her word.

Armand laughed, too, in all good-nature.

"You just wait till you see me," he protested blithely. "I've got it in me, I tell you."

Esther clapped her hands together.

"Stuff yourself out with pillows, my treasure, and try Falstaff," she advised. "But Romeo! With those merry eyes and that—that—"

At a loss for words, she raised herself on one elbow and gave him a series of maternal thumps.

Armand tossed his handsome head and drew away from her.

"Come, mother," he warned, "don't be so blamed playful, please."

His black eyes, still full of an amused sparkle, held in them also a decided scorn. "I'm not joking, you know."

Esther tossed him a sheepish glance; the suspicion of his disapproval struck terror to her heart.

"My sweet little baby," she cooed sentimentally. "Forgive me—I thought you were playing a trick on me."

She was silent for a moment.

Armand got up and strolled over to

a mirror. He thrust out a sleek leg and contemplated the reflection in grave satisfaction.

Poor Esther's sense of humor again got the better of her discretion.

"You're a naughty boy," she scolded. "You're going to play Shakespeare because you want to show some woman how pretty your legs are in tights."

She shook with a new burst of laughter.

Armand ignored this for a moment. At length, smiling rather haughtily, he turned his back on the mirror and faced his mother. The look he gave her was so suave and insulting that Esther's big eyes filled with tears of discouragement.

"Great, stupid, lovable *animal*!"—that was the message his glance sent flying at her.

She got it. The chap had tested the efficiency of the insolent expression before this—twenty years before, in fact.

He waited now, sure of his ground.

Esther dug her knuckles into her eyes; her cheeks trembled, positively wobbled like a baby's, and she began to blubber.

"Armand, *don't* look at your poor old mother like that," she implored. "I didn't mean to hurt you; I was only having a little fun, my darling."

She stretched out her magnificent arms; Armand dropped sweetly to his knees beside the bed and allowed her to hug him, to press her wet cheek against his, to kiss him again and again. His smile soothed her beyond measure; but it still conveyed quite frankly the fact that he wasn't the least bit moved by the demonstration.

"That's a treasure," Esther whispered hoarsely. "Just put up with me, that's all I want. You think I'm an old fool—of course I can see it. But I don't care—only *love* me, Armand."

III

ROSENAUER did not get her money back with interest; the Shakespearian venture failed to bring a cent into her coffers. Unsupported by printed trans-

ports and fervent audiences, Armand soon grew weary of his ambitious project. His Hamlet provoked mirth. His Romeo wasn't very bad. The public, however, refused to warm up; the poor fellow was forced to beat his liver with alcohol in order to keep going at all.

Before long, he imbibed so freely in his dressing-room that he muddled the bard's choicest and most familiar phrases; he even forgot his lines in the balcony scene and made up a few on the spur of the moment. They were very pretty lines, but they were not Shakespeare.

The end came painlessly after the performance when he tripped and fell headlong into the Capulet monument. The fiasco did not discourage him; he emerged with his characteristic smile undimmed. His repertory season had really been a valuable experiment; it had proved beyond dispute that Shakespeare's spell was confined to the library, that any attempt to put his cumbersome dramas before the public must come to grief.

Armand's next scheme for the founding of an eternal fame so terrified his mother that she resorted to extravagant bribes and finally succeeded in buying him off. He had announced his determination to explore darkest Africa, to penetrate the lushest and most hideous jungles of the fierce continent. His object was not pelf, not the lugging home of skins and tusks. Neither plunder nor scientific research had anything to do with it. It was his plan to gather material for an epic poem.

"What Homer did for Greece, Dante and Milton for Heaven and Hell, I hope to accomplish for Africa."

Thus Armand to the newspapers! Esther's clamours had their way, however; her son's submission was very gracious, though his wistful, uncontrollable pout showed the extent of the sacrifice.

The final savage row between Esther and Eugene Dekker occurred at about this time. It was the most disgraceful sort of pugilistic encounter; the actress came out of it with a few negli-

gible bruises, but the puny playwright was laid up for a fortnight. An irreparable break this time!—of that there could be no doubt. A terrible blow had been dealt the drama; the dissolving of such an heroic, historical alliance caused the public and the press many a tragic pang.

Armand, however, was by no means stricken; the fight had pointed the way for him. After all, the only satisfactory and abiding partnership must naturally be that existing between two powers possessed by a single man. In other words—to frame the thought less cryptically—an actor should write his own plays, provided he was blessed with both the creative genius and the histrionic. Armand *was* so blessed; he therefore got right to work.

The drama he proposed to write would be in large measure autobiographical; it would give the world unflinchingly a great truth in regard to himself and his position in society. This statement and the hint that he meant to kill himself off in the fifth act were the only bits of information Armand vouchsafed at first. To be sure, it was going to be a frightful job; but he had faith in his own powers.

After three months of travail—unremitting labour, according to Armand—he informed the world that he had hit upon a title and completed the outline of the play: "The Son of His Father" was to be a tragedy of modern life, a frank picture of a noble nature succumbing to brute circumstance.

Curiosity was already awakened in the theater-going public; it waxed prodigiously, astoundingly, when Eugene Dekker himself confirmed the wild rumour that he had been called into consultation and had consented to collaborate with "this immensely promising young man." Henceforth the play and its makers became shrouded in deep mystery; that, of course, was Dekker's policy. He loved to have people guessing; it was evidence of his power to enforce obedience that he proved equal to the task of keeping the ebullient Armand gagged.

Esther's attitude in the affair called forth excited comment; she remained firm in her vociferous detestation of Eugene, inflexible in her determination never again to do one of his plays. Her son's conduct, on the other hand, came in for her most enthusiastic praise.

"He is willing to sacrifice personal enmity in the interests of Art," she reminded everybody in ear-shot.

The words were not original with her; Armand had preached to her with tremendous eloquence on that text and had brought her around in no time at all. His devotion to a high calling had inspired quaking awe in his lovable mother. Poor Esther's maternal passion prompted her to a wondrous generosity; in order to give Armand the undisputed center of the stage, she made no plans for the coming season, announcing only that she was rather fagged and would take a much-needed sabbatical year.

For fifteen years, the sun, theatrically speaking, had risen in mid-November. Esther had been the one to hold the reins; she had proved a most reliable sun-goddess. This season, Armand was to be in charge of the fiery steeds. The point was, would the fellow turn out to be a twentieth century Phaeton?

On Monday, the twentieth of November, the world would learn the truth; "Armand Rosenauer in 'The Son of His Father,' a play in five acts, by Eugene Dekker and Armand Rosenauer," had somehow a momentous sound and tempted one to rhetorical flights of prophecy. Ten to one, the Monday evening would go down in theatrical annals as a date to be cherished in the memory forever.

IV

AFTER the thunderous ovation at the close of the first act, Armand had to be led to his dressing-room; he was shaking, gasping. He mopped his clammy forehead and swore confusedly.

"But—but I don't understand," he stammered. "They're taking it as a joke; they *laugh* at me, Dekker."

It had indeed been a frightful ordeal—that first act. From the moment of his entrance to the fall of the curtain, Armand's every utterance had been greeted with shouts of laughter. People had rocked helplessly in their chairs, had dabbed at their streaming eyes, had clutched their sides in an agony of merriment; the strange part of the miserable business had been that the mirth had seemed of the most friendly and enthusiastic sort. The curtain-calls had been endless; still shaking, still weeping in hysterical delight, the audience had cheered lustily the bashful bows of the new star. The big theatre reverberated with the applause and the vociferous bravos.

Poor Armand, his head swimming, had been pitifully at a loss; it was all like the whirling confusion of delirium. He couldn't believe that he was awake and in his right senses. Time and again, things had gone black; once he had actually lost consciousness for a few seconds. Propped against the scenery, however, he had managed to keep up on his tottering legs. He loved so passionately the tense dialogue of that first act! He had meant to wring his hearers' hearts, to force bitter tears to their eyes. But this—*this* was desecration. The scene was one of terrific import; Dekker himself had called it superb. Never before had the guilty mother and the noble son been treated with such power; the wild interview between Hamlet and Queen Gertrude paled before it—so Dekker had claimed, so Armand had believed.

Young Raoul de Bertrand, in this opening scene of "The Son of His Father," confronts his mother (an amazing Amazon, grotesquely resembling Esther) with the heartrending news that he has discovered his base birth; a duel of wits follows, the son in a frenzy of righteousness, the mother trickily striving to lie out of her predicament. At last, cornered, she confesses the truth but, in sweeping triumph, informs the youth that his father is a king, one of the most powerful monarchs of the earth. Raoul's first

great speech follows, a fiery denunciation, a very clarion-call of virtue. "This man and you have committed mortal sin; you hide behind a gilt and tinsel throne and think yourselves excused. But, no! God and I will wreak vengeance for the wrong—" The curtain falls on the tableau of the stricken, repentant mother and the exhausted but forgiving son.

And people had *laughed*!

They continued to laugh and to acclaim the sick, despairing Armand. At bay, he outdid himself; he became positively maniacal in his soliloquies, in his lengthy evangelical tirades. Not once, during that horrible evening, did he wring his auditors' hearts; alas no! True, he racked and tortured them; but from start to finish it was a case of "laughter holding both his sides." The grisly banquet scene, ending in the deaths of the mother, the monarch and the tragic Raoul, reaped a whirlwind of gleeful applause. The audience rushed in a body down the aisles, bombarded Armand with bouquets and yelled compliments until everybody in the place was as hoarse as the bewildered hero himself. An historical night, an epoch-making night indeed! Armand, the sole victim of the extemporaneous battle of flowers, lurched forward suddenly; somebody caught him and dragged him off the stage.

The next thing he saw clearly was his mother. She was pushing crowds of people out of her way, shoving men and women to right and left. On she swept, implacable and vengeful; her nostrils quivered, her wonderful white arms cleared a wide passage.

Instinctively, Armand cowered.

At the door of the dressing-room, Esther paused; she seemed to fill the place, like Alice in the rabbit's cottage.

"I want to be alone with my son for a moment!" Her voice rumbled ominously.

People slunk off with guilty, sheepish looks; Esther slammed the flimsy door on them and faced Armand.

"You booby; you God-forsaken idiot!" she boomed. "Dekker's made a

dupe of you—do you know it? He's ruined *my* reputation; and *you*—you're a laughing-stock! A puppy with a fit—that's what you acted like—"

Her face was purple; she inflated her cheeks, blew out her wrath in windy gusts.

It was the vulgarest possible exhibition; Armand's momentary awe vanished.

He gave her a delicately scornful glance.

"I told you not to come to-night," he said. "I'm tired; I'm not in the mood for a brawl, mother."

Esther, still at the bursting-point, thrust a slip of paper at him, shook it within an inch of his nose.

"Did you know about *this*?" she gasped. "Were you a party to this? There was one of these damnable, libelous things slipped into every program."

Armand took the printed notice.

He turned his back on her, got the light properly focussed, tilted a little finger fastidiously and proceeded to read the document that had so incensed her:

"'The Son of His Father' is of course pure burlesque," it ran.

"The satire is aimed principally at the ridiculous figure of the mother; the entire fabric is, as it were, a product of *her* imagination. Raoul, the pompous monarch and the bloody events of the drama are her brain-children. The audience is asked to believe that whatever happens in the play really takes place in her overheated mind. When the curtain rises on the first act, she sits alone at her dressing-table; the ramping, bow-wow entrance of Raoul is, so to speak, the beginning of her dream—her vision of what life *should* be. The moral of the burlesque is cogent enough; an attempt has been made to show the ludicrous lengths to which a nature of this sort must inevitably go when left to its own devices. The emotional, unintelligent actress is lost forever, once the controlling hand of the wise tutor lets go its grasp. C  ste de Bertrand, famous actress and mother of our hero, Raoul de Bertrand, will, it is hoped, become as famous and mirth-provoking a personage as the burgher's wife is 'The Knight of the Burning Pestle.'"

For a long time after he had finished the reading, Armand remained bent over the slip of paper. He could hear Esther's snorts of indignation, could

see through the mirror her heaving chest. Everything seemed to have given way under him; he wondered vaguely whether he weren't dying at that very moment from a stroke of apoplexy; surely he wouldn't survive *this* shock. He rested both hands on the dressing-table and waited for the end to come.

Then, all at once he saw a great, a dazzling light. What a fool he'd been! Providence had worked for him after all. The fiendish Dekker had been made sport of. He, Armand Rosenauer, had in a single night achieved renown as the greatest *comedian*, the most delicious *buffoon* of all time. His ears vibrated at the remembrance of the furious plaudits. At last it was clear—what it had all been about. Armand Rosenauer aloft; Eugene and poor Esther no better than burnt offerings on the altar of his fame!

Armand turned, with his characteristic smile of affection and scorn firmly affixed.

His eyes never once wavered from Esther's face as he talked to her with suave indulgence; moment by moment, her distended outlines decreased toward their normal size; the force of her towering rage ebbed as if his glance had contained the power to absorb heat and to control the temperature; her features appeared almost to run together like wax before he had finished, so dreadfully did the oncoming rush of tears disfigure and contort her face.

"Mother dear, of *course* I was a party to it," Armand began. "For years I've studied you. I've seen how your eccentricities were increasing; I've been so afraid you'd go too far—so far that people would laugh at you. When you fought with Dekker, I knew *I'd* have to *act* or else you'd soon suffer the indignity of an audience's booing. So I decided to put up an effigy, a dummy—don't you *see*?—and let the public have a go at that. I thought it would be the charitable thing, my poor, over-sensitive, foolish mother."

She was blubbing now,—desperately, penitently.

"My treasure, my baby," she cooed in a muted contralto. "It seems—oh, it *does* seem cruel—but I'm an old fool. You know best—"

He soothed her.

"As long as I live, I will be a faithful son," he informed her coolly. "Now dry your eyes, mother. There are so many people—boring reporters and silly women—I've got to see. Run the gauntlet, you know!"

He rushed to the door, flung it open

and, with an outstretched hand and a merry laugh confronted the surging, clamorous crew of admirers.

"Thank you— ah, thank you! Yes, indeed, I mean to have a go at 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme'—and dear old Sir John, too. To be sure! We'll hope my present vehicle, however, will last me a few seasons—no, not more than three. A man shouldn't allow himself to go stale—I realize that, I assure you. I shall be very careful—"



IN judging a woman, a man is conscious only of her merits, a woman only of her defects.



THE trouble with love is that it won't remain blind.



MAN is an animal that sins.



FAME: a candle in a tomb.



Le Petit Voyou

By E. G. Perrier

C'ÉTAIT un petit loqueteux—seize ans à peine—qui s'en allait cahin-caha par les routes et couchait la nuit dans les fossés. Les chiens aboyaient sur son passage, les hommes lui montraient le poing, les femmes lui jetaient des pierres. Lui, l'âme pleine de quiétude, souriait. Il était plus riche que les riches : le ciel avec tous ses rayons et tous les parfums des champs, était à lui ; à lui aussi l'air pur, les ruisseaux serpentant dans les prairies et l'espérance, cette fée du printemps qu'il enfermait dans son cœur comme en un coffre-fort. Il était heureux. Quand il avait faim, il chantait. Les gens l'appelaient : le petit voyou.

Or, il arriva qu'un jour une puissance étrangère déclara la guerre à la France. Les enfants des bourgeois restèrent bien tranquillement dans leurs foyers, dorlotés par leurs mamans. Le petit voyou, qui n'avait ni foyer, ni maman, se fit mousse. On l'embarqua sur un grand navire, et on l'emmena très loin, vers l'Orient, dans un pays où les villes étaient devenues citadelles, et où les balles perdues avaient pris dans le ciel la place des oiseaux. On lui mit une baïonnette au côté et dans la main un chassepot, et un matin que la fusillade avait devancé le chant du coq, on l'envoya à la bataille entre deux grognards en shakos à plume.

Ah ! si vous l'aviez vu sous l'uniforme, redressant son pauvre petit corps maigrelet pour avoir l'air d'un homme, et sacrant comme un grenadier !

Le premier coup de fusil lui fit peur. Le second le fit rire. Un obus entra dans le ventre d'un cheval et l'éclaboussa de sang. Il cria : "Vive l'Empereur !" Quand sonna la charge, il était le pre-

mier à côté des tambours et, pendant que les hommes tombaient, il battait des mains et chantait à tue-tête la *Marseillaise*. . . .

Tout à coup, au-dessus de lui, un vacuum effroyable passa. Il s'arrêta, interdit, fit ouf ! regarda en l'air et vit un gros nuage noir remplir le ciel. C'était un canon qu'on venait de hisser sur la proche colline. Les lignes françaises faiblissaient ; ce canon là venait à la rescousse et sa grosse voix pleine de colère, martelant l'écho, soufflant la tempête, avait l'air de crier : "Halte-là ! . . ."

Et la fusillade crépitait ! A droite, à gauche, le champ était couvert de morts et de blessés. Les survivants se glissaient en rampant de sillons en sillons. . . .

— Couche-toi, le gosse !—commanda un vieux sergent.

Mais lui, immobile, frémissant, seul debout, regardait le canon ! Ah oui ! se coucher : il y pensait bien . . . !

— Boum !—répéta le monstre.

Et ce fut merveilleux ! la terre trembla, une odeur de soufre emplît la plain. . . .

Alors l'enfant n'y tint plus ! . . . Il se revoyait, tout petit, un soir de Quatorze Juillet, sur une quelconque place publique, courant à travers les pétards, tirant les fusées, se grisant de poudre, de bruit, d'éclairs. . . . Étaient-elles, assez jolies, les petites fusées qui s'épanouissaient en gerbes d'or ou en bouquets de marguerites ! . . . Il aurait fait des folies pour elles. . . . Et les bombes, les bombes minuscules, qui pesaient lourd dans ses bras, comme elles éclataient fort, en crachant une gerbe de feu !

— Boum! — fit-il en gonflant ses joues en sautant de joie.

Mais des fusées et des bombes comme celles qui partaient là-haut, jamais, non jamais encore, il n'en avait vu!

— Boum! Boum! — gémissait, l'écho.

Etourdi, titubant, il jeta son shako en l'air, trépigna, cria: "Bravo!" et il tendit ses petites mains vers le canon comme s'il avait voulu le posséder, jouer avec lui.

Justement, le hasard du combat l'avait conduit au pied de la colline. Pour l'escalader, il dut s'aider des pieds et des mains. En cinq minutes, il arriva sur le faite. . . .

Il était temps. Autour de la pièce que l'ennemi mitraillait, plus un homme n'était debout. Mais le nuage épais flottait toujours, rendant invisible le désastre, et le monstre fumait, la gueule rougie, béante, semblant attendre qu'on vînt lui dire de parler encore. . . . Il y avait un obus à terre. Le gamin le ramassa et le glissa dans la culasse. . . . Le coup partit avec un fracas magnifique. Une trombe de feu surgit, enveloppa l'enfant, lui lécha les mains, la figure, l'éblouit, l'enivra, le fit hurler. Il

ramassa un second obus et partit d'un grand éclat de rire. Puis un troisième, puis dix, puis vingt, et tous ceux qui se trouvaient là, épars, dans le sang et dans la boue, eurent leur tour, et ce fut un spectacle étourdissant, la colline semblant devenue volcan, l'enfant diable et le ciel fournaise. . . .

Cela durait depuis une heure quand une main se posa sur l'épaule de l'enfant qui se détourna, saisi. Devant lui, il y avait un homme galonné d'or, portant le tricorné et la croix d'honneur.

— Tu es seul, gamin? —

— Seul, mon général, — balbutia-t-il, en joignant les mains pour demander pardon.

— Depuis longtemps?

— Peut-être. . . .

— Sais-tu ce que tu viens de faire? — dit l'homme que l'émotion étrangeait. Et brusquement il arrachait sa croix et l'épinglait sur la poitrine de l'enfant, échevelé, noir, roussi, qui avait l'air d'un fauve et pleurait à chaudes larmes, bêtement, sans savoir pourquoi. . . .

— Tuviens de gagner la bataille! — ajouta le général. Et il embrassa le petit voyou.



WHEN a girl gives a party, it is a device for concealing the desire to meet one man by inviting a lot of others.



THERE is a gentle way of saying everything. A woman of thirty-two is twice sweet sixteen.



A Play, and Some Plays

By George Jean Nathan

I

ONE was reminded in seeing the presentation of Henri Bataille's "L'Homme à la Rose," locally rechristened "Don Juan," that one of the great pieces of dramatic writing of our generation is next month, or the month after, to be disclosed to the American theatre. I allude, obviously enough, to "The Last Night of Don Juan," by Edmond Rostand, a play profoundly born, profoundly wise, and profoundly beautiful. Three times in nine months I have read it, and three times, made boozy by its beauty, I have found myself periodically raising my eyes from the manuscript and pausing to address to myself a glowing critical soliloquy. For here are the laughter and tears of genius woven into a great, gay ache—a super-Schnitzlerian tapestry shot through with the brilliant threads of fancy, poetry and sardonic pathos. For here are literature and drama inextricably intertwined: a true masterpiece of the theatre.

Like fine drama of its kind ever, there is something remote about the play. You make to touch it with your fingers, and it is not there. It is a mood on the wind, springtime melting into summer and fading into autumn in the span of a moment. From the time its Don Juan re-climbs the steps of Hell to enjoy his respite in the world of women, repeating with each upward step the name of Ninon . . . Laura . . . Armande . . . Jeanne, to the time the devil metes out to him his ironic punishment as the reincarnation of Punchinello in a traveling marionette show—from beginning to end it is as present, and yet as elusive, as the memory of a forgotten tune. Its

episodes are a succession of dramatic jewels.

Where Molière's "Le Festin de Pierre" ends, Rostand's work begins. (The prologue has been reconstructed from the author's notes, and is only an outline.) The play carries its central character through scene after scene of wit, charm and tender derisory philosophy. Beside it, all the Don Juan plays ever written, from Zamora's to Grabbe's, and from Molière's to Tellez's and those of the modern continental comedy school of Hans Otto, von Schmitz and Thaddeus Rittner, take on a varying sense of imaginative pallor. Rostand's is an infinitely impudent, infinitely dreamful, infinitely delicate Don Juan—"I am of another essence than your Doctor Faust who wished nothing better than a little German girl," he boasts—"A town of love has watched my natal day; my dying day should see a town of love. Only one epitaph is fitting for Don Juan: 'He was born at Seville and died at Venice!'" he dreams—"I have traveled everywhere, like a fairy tale," and his words are fragile and far away. . . . Rostand's Don Juan is at once a wit, a philosopher and a child. "One is burned when one has said 'I love you,'" he reminds Punch. "Then how is it done?" asks Punch. "By nudging her? By making eyes?" "That is too stupid; 'tis too carp-like," replies Don Juan. "How should I look?" asks Punch. "Like a chasm," replies Don Juan.

Here is Rostand's indomitable Aiglon, grown mature, and off the field of Mars and in the court of Venus: "I am a monster with a soul, a wild-beast archangel, who has preserved, in his fall, his wing." Here is Rostand's

Chantecler in doublet and hose: "I am the nostalgia of all! There is no work—despite your hissing, oh ancient adler—no virtue, no science and no faith which does not regret it is not I." "What," asks the devil, "will remain of that?" And Rostand's Cyrano with the small nose answers, "That which remains of Alexander's ashes, and knows that it was Alexander!"

For sheer poetic loveliness there are a half dozen scenes in the play that are not surpassed in modern dramatic literature. Of these all, most noteworthy perhaps is the scene wherein the devil tears into as many small pieces the list of Don Juan's one thousand and three conquests and sends them, like snow, out upon the moonlit bosom of the Adriatic, there each suddenly to be transformed into a gondola bearing the spirit of the woman whose name was thereon. I say most noteworthy, and promptly doubt my words. For even finer is the ensuing scene wherein the thousand shadows of silver blue mount silently the stairway to challenge and torment Don Juan's memory of them—he cannot penetrate their masks, their masks of what passed for love, and blindly, desperately, he searches face upon face—it is . . . it is . . . it is . . .—to the curtain fall. And finer, more beautifully imagined still, is the scene wherein the shadows slowly, derisively, yet tenderly, strip Don Juan of his amorous gasconade and the scene wherein Don Juan, at the devil's bidding, collects in a frail chalice the frozen tear-drop that each shadow wears, like a jewel, in the corner of her mask—which tears the devil, peering through an enormous lens, then ironically analyses.

The life of the theatre lies in plays like this. For one such, a thousand deadly evenings are gladly endurable. Such episodes as that of the secret tear, the only one the devil may not touch, the tear of pity for Don Juan; such profound mockery as the paint and canvas hell to which the still strutting Don Juan is in the end consigned; such humour as lies in Don Juan's pathetic serenity before the cavalcade of his

shadow loves and such poetry as lies in the one white fragment of the torn list—these are the stuff of a glorified and imperishable theatre. The play is to be presented by Mr. Arnold Daly.

* * *

Though the descent to Bataille's Don Juan play is abrupt and dizzy, and though it bears the same relation to the Rostand work of art that the equestrian statue at the entrance to Central Park bears to the Pieta of Michelangelo, it is yet far and away the best piece of writing that Bataille has done, and a theatre piece very much above the average. Its theme is of a Don Juan in relentless battle against equally relentless age, with age the inevitable conqueror. There is not much imagination displayed in the working out of the theme, and of poetry there is negligible trace; but there is a layer of sardonic humour and even, now and again, a flicker of wit. George Bernard Shaw is reported as saying that this is the best play on Don Juan that he has ever read. If the report is true, one must only conclude that the estimable G. Bernard has again been sampling the same seidel that, fifteen years ago, persuaded him to believe in the tremendous genius of Eugène Brieux.

Bataille, even in his periodic streaks of theatrical effectiveness, is a not especially lustreful writer: his pen, like his mind, rarely gleams or flashes; he is, at best, an interesting plodder. And his Don Juan is like him: a character interesting as a climb up a hard, long, picturesque mountain road is interesting. Yet, as I have said, the play at its worst is better—much better—than the great majority of the season's plays at their best. It contains the point of view of a reflective and often not unhumorous man; it is never banal; it is at least an effort at something worth-while. Its local revelation, however, was sorely handicapped by the selection of Mr. Lou Tellegen for the central rôle. This Lou, dressed to resemble a Hippodrome Little Lord Fauntleroy and with a Lew Fields yellow wig and accent, was a jocose Don. Even if he were an actor,

which he is not, his appearance in this instance would have been sufficient to set off loud guffaws in his romantic lady customers. The translation of the French text by Lawrence Langner was a bit stiff and Berlitz, and one was given to question the ethics of the local pilfering of one of the most effective pieces of stage business from the Rostand play.

II

THE Town Hall was erected a year or so ago by a group of high-minded and altruistic citizens to serve as a forum of American public opinion. It was consecrated as a meeting place of Truth, and its spacious platform was dedicated to addresses and debates that should exalt the national and municipal honour and further the ideals of good citizenship and government. Across the front entrance were inscribed appropriate words from the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Here, at last, was a meeting place where public-spirited men might discuss their country's needs and seek to learn and solve their country's problems. The walls would ring as on a time once rang the walls of Independence Hall and Faneuil. The stage, draped with a score of starry flags, should sound a thousand challenges to the forces that would corrupt the Republic and dim its glory in the eyes of man. The national anthem should open every meeting: a fine organ was installed for the purpose. And as a further prelude the words of the Saviour, "The truth shall set ye free," should be spoken by every man who stepped upon the stage.

The stage of the Town Hall is occupied, as I write, by "Put and Take," a coon musical show containing several excellent clog artists, one proficient buck and wing dancer, a couple of good jazz players, and three eminently tasty black wenches.

III

THE names of the characters are Amina, Giovanna, Madelina, Canetto, Jacopone, Ugolino, Fiamma, Fiorenzo, Damiano and the Papal nuncio; the

scene is the tower castle of Ugolino on an island off the shore of Italy; the time is the Middle Ages, the day of Guelphs and Ghibellines; and the author is Sidney Howard, a Harvard boy. It is needless to go farther; you know the play perfectly. It is the one that every third student in the academic courses in our Eastern colleges begins sometime during his Junior year, and never finishes. In this instance, it is named "Swords." More often it is named "The Consiglio of Campanello," or "Mezzogiorno, the Absolute" or "Donna Something or Other." But whatever its name it is in general much the same thing: a dark castle; a devastatingly beautiful but icy red-haired virgin; a lecherous villain made up to look like the viking in the advertisements of the Atlas Brewing Company, together with Quasimodo, his mephistophelian hunch-back minion; a scene wherein the hushed burghers and fisher-folk tread softly in, bow before the shrine and receive blessings; another scene wherein the sinister Quasimodo becomes passionate for the beauteous red-head, the while the latter inhales and exhales her loathing; the sighting on the horizon of the triremes come to the rescue; the elaborate tropes and metaphors; and the trap door at stage centre.

The present version is true to form: a naïve and altiloquent parade of stencils, the sort of pseudo-poetical composition that always passes for literature among the more educated yokels. It is pretentious, and hollow. The one interesting contribution to the evening is the Robert Edmond Jones setting: a nicely relevant and stimulating picture. The leading male rôle is in the hands of José Ruben, who is excellent as José Ruben imitating John Barrymore, if very bad otherwise. The Donna Minestrone is Miss Clare Eames, a moderately talented young woman who has succeeded cleverly in hocus-pocusing herself into undeserved prominence. (I shall, one of these days, go into the general subject of New York theatrical backslapping. A voluptuous topic!) Miss

Eames speaks clearly and pronounces accurately; there is a welcome suggestion of hard intelligence about her; now and again she is able to achieve a fleeting moment of effective drama. But beyond this she is merely the Sargent School sort of thing. She lacks charm, eloquence, tenderness, simplicity; she cannot for a moment touch the heart or fire the passions. She already knows how to bow at curtain calls fully as well as Duse—arms now flung wide, abdomen now curved far in, head now dejected in magnificent humility—but she does not yet know anything of the true business of acting.

Another young actress humorously elevated to sudden stardom is Miss Helen Mackellar. Miss MacKellar is a fairly competent and agreeable performer who gave an exceptionally good performance of the central woman rôle in O'Neill's "Beyond the Horizon," but her current performance in the lead of "Back Pay" is a revelation of her shortcomings. The play in point is a dramatization by Fannie Hurst of her popular magazine story of the same name. It is still another revamping of the materials of "The Easiest Way" with a weather eye to the stenographer and shop-girl trade. It is sentimental, false, and without quality. In brief, moving picture fodder. Mr. A. H. Woods, the producer, offered me an excellent cigar on my way into the theatre and confided to me that I wouldn't like the play. A gentleman and a scholar!

IV

ABOUT one story in every ten submitted to the editors of this magazine treats of a dull conglomeration of senseless events the arrant stupidity and unreadableness of which the author seeks to mask by tacking on a last line to the effect that "life, too, is after all just that way: inchoate, inscrutable, meaningless . . ." Although Miss Zoë Akins is by no means a dull, stupid or uninteresting author, she seems to me to have been guilty of this same dodge in her latest play, "Daddy's Gone A-Hunting." The first act ends with

the ruminative and despairing line, "God knows!" So far, so good. The second act ends with precisely the same words. A bit weaker, but still reasonable enough. Then the third and last act with the words again, and the device becomes suspect and not a little unconsciously comic. It is not so much that Miss Akins seeks, like the writers to whom I have alluded, to bamboozle her auditors with this last line caprice (by Conrad out of Hauptmann). It is that she seeks therewith to bamboozle herself. For the theme which she has here set herself is one so incomplex and transpicuous that its generic problems, far from being intelligible only to the Almighty, are clearly within the precinct of mortal understanding. One is therefore prompted to believe that the playwright has privileged herself to posture a trifle, and to attempt to bequeath to her play a note of profundity and importance that it does not in any degree possess.

Her story is simple. A married man of equivocal artistic promptings has a taste for women other than his wife. When the latter learns the news and is asked how this can be, she gazes long and hard at the audience and wonderingly passes the afore-mentioned philosophical buck to God. One speculates why, since it is perfectly clear that the husband enjoys the company of women other than his wife because they are keenly sympathetic toward his work and aspirations and because his wife, an honourable but commonplace and prosaic woman, is not. In the second act, the wife, driven to desperation by her husband's downright cruelty and neglect, leaves him. He, in turn, then also gazes long and hard at the audience and, in similar bewilderment, leaves the solution of her desertion to the Lord. Again one speculates why, since it is absurdly clear even to the girl ushers that it is the only thing that any such woman could reasonably do under the circumstances. In the third act, the husband refuses a reconciliation with his wife, whose paramour of five years stands ready and eager to marry her.

Again she addresses the solution of her problem to God, when it is clearly in the hands of her paramour.

The play contains three flashes of Miss Akins' fitful yet undeniable skill—the episode just before the entrance of the husband in Act I, the speech on husbands in Act II, and the situation in Act III wherein the wife, husband and lover confront one another. These are fresh, well imagined, deftly executed. But for the rest the play is a monotonous, heavy and self-conscious groping for the Viennese philosophy, viewpoint and savour. At her worst, of course, Miss Akins is infinitely better than the Broadway Bahrs and Galsworthys, but in this manuscript she is inferior to herself. Miss Marjorie Rambeau gives one of her familiar stock company leading woman performances as the wife. Frank Conroy is good, if often inaudible, as the artist husband. Lee Baker plays the lover as if the latter had always just come from, or was on the point of going to, the Lambs' Club.

V

THE absurdities and demerits of so-called constructive dramatic criticism are made clearly evident in the case of Mr. Owen Davis. For twenty-five years this Mr. Davis has been writing box-office plays which, if they failed to baffle the critics, at least did not fail to entertain many thousands of yokels and make a large pot of money for their author. The critics, however, for all the success of Mr. Davis in his chosen and appropriate field, kept up meanwhile a vigorous tattoo upon his ego. They deplored his failure to Take Himself Seriously, his venal digression from the path of aesthetics, his abuses of Aristotelian law, his prostitution of his Harvard education, his degradation of his own and the popular taste, his surrender to the mob point of view. There must be better stuff in him, they said, and why did he not permit himself to work it out? Laboriously they pointed out to him why his plays were bad plays, and how they might be improved. The names of other Americans like

young Eugene O'Neill were dangled challengingly before his eyes. And they asserted, finally, not without a trace of irritation, that he would be deserving of no further attention from them unless he took himself in hand and did, for once at least, the best there was in him.

Davis took these incantations to heart. Like other of our popular playwrights in the past, he became fired with the resolve to prove for once and all time to his critics that he was no mere box-office empty-head but that, to the contrary, he was at bottom really an important dramatic artist who had been deliberately laughing up his sleeve all these twenty-five years and had got rich doing so. The proof which he now has offered to his critics, the proof with which he now confidently beards Art, is a drama called "The Detour." It has been hailed by Mr. Davis' constructive critics as a tremendous step forward on his part, a little masterpiece which vindicates the integrity of their advice to him, and it is, for all its pretence, quite as empty as the bulk of his twenty-five years' antecedent writing. An attempt at the Eugene O'Neill-St. John Ervine type of play, it reveals nothing. The theme is suspiciously like that of a story by L. M. Hussey, published a year and one half ago; the characters are so much stage timber; the dialogue is vaudeville Manchester; the incidental viewpoint is commonplace. The best constructive criticism that can be written of Mr. Davis directs itself toward the recommendation not that he try to write sound drama, which is apparently considerably beyond his capabilities, but that he continue to devote himself to the more or less lucrative boob *opera* which lie thoroughly within the range of those capabilities, if without the range of sober criticism.

VI

"SIX-CYLINDER LOVE," by William A. McGuire, is a highly proficient box-office version of Lee Wilson Dodd's play "Speed," produced in the Comedy Theatre about ten years ago. The two plays, unless memory does me ill, travel

identical tracks in everything save humour. The more recently produced play is comical where its predecessor was disposed to be serious. The result is an amusing commercial exhibit not without a touch, here and there, of quick observation. The theme of the two plays is the automobile mania and its effect upon the household that cannot quite afford the expense but that nonetheless plunges. Ernest Truex is exceptionally good in the central rôle, and Miss June Walker lends him agreeable support.

VII

As "Miss Thompson," by W. Somerset Maugham, is the most expert and brilliantly ironic story written by an Englishman in the last few years, so "The Circle," by W. Somerset Maugham, is the most expert and brilliantly ironic comedy. In the matter of treatment and characterization this play far outdistances anything that its author has hitherto composed for the theatre and, beyond this, it outdistances, too, the bulk of comedy imported from England since the beginning of the war. It is at once tough and tender, derisory and sympathetic, frothy and profound. Its first and third acts are as smoothly conceived and as deftly executed as the best work of Alfred Capus (of whom Maugham is in the way of being an Anglicized version); and the weakness of its middle act, emphasized in the local revelation by maladroitness acting on the part of the actress cast for Elizabeth, fails to dim the interest of a composition that, in its entirety, ranks well up in contemporary satiric comedy.

Maugham is in the habit of considering cynicism as the truth with a belly-ache, and himself as a dose of castor oil. This is his play-writing formula. The bulk of his dramatic writing, with negligible exception, pursues the technique of purging cynicism of its bitterness and thus making the underlying truth palatable to those who would otherwise not swallow it. "The Circle" follows this plan. It presents a wayward old couple and a prospectively way-

ward young couple. The old couple seek to offer themselves to the young couple as a horrible example and to dissuade the latter from making the mistake they made. The young couple give congenial ear—and then run off in high happiness to make the same mistake. Thus does Maugham sardonically paraphrase the old saw that experience is a wise teacher. This paraphrase he accomplishes with a facile wit and humour, a sharp and sly observation of character, a smart gift for emotional counterpoint. Several of his scenes are admirable instances of dramatic writing: the scene at the bridge table, for example; the scene with the photograph album; the scene between the absurd but pathetically lovable old harridan and the husband from whom she ran away; the scene between the old girl and her decayed, false-toothed paramour. This is comedy a-sparkle with intelligence, polite sophistication and tender disillusion. And it is beautifully played by John Drew and—how droll the gods!—Mrs. Leslie Carter. The latter's handling of the wistful scene wherein figures the photograph of herself as a girl in the twenties is as fetching a bit of serio-comic acting as I have seen on our stage in a number of years. Ernest Lawford is a trifle too monotonous as the ex-husband; John Halliday is an inflexible juvenile; and Miss Estelle Winwood plays the romantic young wife with the air of a true Bloomsbury aristocrat.

VIII

"THE death of Carlos Wupperman, after a record of brave service for his country during the war, makes it difficult for a critic to perform his obvious duty in regard to the play, 'The Triumph of X' which Wupperman left behind him." Thus, Mons. Macgowan, critic to *The Globe*, in what one fears has become an ubiquitous attitude of American criticism. Thus has the old cry for morals in art been supplanted by the cry for patriotism in art. The campaign so fiercely waged in this di-

rection by such valorous military men and war veterans as General Brander Matthews and Lieutenant-Colonel Stuart P. Sherman would seem to be proving successful. Art in America, it appears, must henceforth be a member of the American Legion.

That the death of the gallant Mr. Wupperman after a record of brave war service should make it difficult for a critic to appraise his play seems to me to be nevertheless as inscrutable as the allegation that it should be equally difficult for a critic to appraise the plays of Eugène Brieux because he has no record of brave war service, and is therefore still alive. Mr. Wupperman's play, for all its author's personal valour, is poor stuff: an amateurish extract from Brieux at his worst. A tract on dipsomania and heredity, it closely resembles a play of some years ago called "Her Wedding Day," also produced by the Miss Bonstelle responsible for the present production. This production was illumined only by an effective performance on the part of Miss Helen Menken in the rôle of the dipsomaniac. Still, come to think of it, there has never been an actor or actress who has failed to score heavily in a scene of drunkenness. The leading man was Mr. Frank Morgan who has a head of hair like David Warfield's and makes a violent effort to live up to it.

"Two Blocks Away" is a lethargic machine-made vehicle for the talented Barney Bernard prepared by Aaron Hoffman. Bernard is, as always, excellent. A number of my spies in the outlying districts report to me that the play bears a close resemblance to a story by Jerome K. Jerome called "The Master of Woodbarrow," or something of the sort. I have never read the story, so I don't know whether this great piece of news is true or not. "The Wheel," by Winchell Smith, is a philippic against gambling after the usual box-office technique of sentimentality abruptly relieved now and again by low comedy.

It is not up to the Smith mark, although it contains an exceptionally well worked out gambling house scene in one of its acts. The acting is mediocre save in the instance of one O'Reilly, who exposes an uncommonly realistic picture in a minor rôle. "The Hero" is a revival of Emery Pottle's worth-while drama of last season. Richard Bennett has the rôle created by Grant Mitchell and gives an interpretation of it inferior to the latter's. "The Greenwich Village Follies," version of 1921, reveals nothing new save costumes and scenery. These are attractive.

"The Elton Case," by William Deveureux, is a cheap and dull melodrama based on the Elwell case. "The Silver Fox" is an adaptation of Franz Herzog's Hungarian sex farce, "The Blue Fox." It remains moderately amusing stuff, despite the circumstance that the adapter has seen fit to make a sentimental comedy out of what was in the original an ironic farce. William Faversham, Lawrence Grossmith and Miss Violet Kemble Cooper are adroit in the leading rôles. "Only 38," by A. E. Thomas, is feeble and tedious comedy in the 1890 manner of *Harpers' Magazine*. "The Blue Lagoon," from the Stacpoole novel, is the old stuff about the girl in straw diapers and the boy in B. V. D.'s who grow up on the deserted island and learn the secrets of life from the birds and the flowers. "Blood and Sand" is a dramatization of the novel of the same name by the Spanish Rupert Hughes. A passionate *pièce*, chesty, grandiose and naïve. "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife" is Alfred Savoir's fairly diverting Paris farce ruined by bad acting and worse direction. And "The White-Headed Boy," about which I shall have more to say on a future occasion, is the most richly amusing comedy come out of Ireland since George Birmingham's "General John Regan." Its author, Lennox Robinson, here once again proves himself the best of the younger Irish dramatists.



More Notes on Books

By H. L. Mencken

§ 1

MEDICAL literature in the United States, until lately so relentlessly scientific, begins to take on a humanistic quality, and there is a steady trickle of new volumes, compounded by such fearsome fish as ophthalmologists, gynecologists and pediatricians, which bid for attention as *belles lettres*. The earlier American tradition, as everyone knows, ran that way. Dr. Benjamin Rush, beside his appalling monographs on blood-letting, also found time to pursue the good and the beautiful; Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes got into the literature-books as well as into the pharmacopœia; even in our own time there was Dr. S. Wier Mitchell. But the enthusiasm for laboratory work, borrowed from Germany and culminating in the establishment of the Johns Hopkins Medical School, tended to convert that ancient expansiveness of the sawbones into a meticulous and even furious exactness, and American medical writing degenerated into something extremely unlovely. Curiously enough, it was the Johns Hopkins that started the reaction toward the humanities, as it had led the movement toward a logarithmic precision. To be more precise, it was one Johns Hopkins man who started it, to wit, William Osler, a man of such rare spirit and such extraordinary gifts as a fulminator and catalyzer that his influence has been sufficient even today, long after his departure, to save the Hopkins Medical School from the depressing Fordization that has overtaken the University proper. Osler was always far more the artist than the scientist. No great advance in internal

medicine is associated with his name; no bacillus, so far as I know, is named after him; he left no theories to bedevil his successors. But he was probably one of the greatest physicians that ever lived—and he was great because he was a man of fine imagination and broad culture; because he understood not only the mechanism of man, but also the nature of man; because he practised his complex craft with something of the passion of a Leonardo. More important still, he managed to get something of this almost æsthetic enthusiasm into his pupils. He left behind him a concept of medicine as a great synthesis, not of sciences alone, but of sciences and arts, and that concept begins to show itself in American medical literature.

It is thus appropriate that the "Physician's Anthology of English and American Poetry," compiled by Dr. Casey A. Woods, of Chicago, and Lieut. Col. Fielding H. Garrison, of the Army Medical Corps (*Oxford University Press*), should be dedicated to the memory of Osler, for it well exemplifies his attitude of mind. Without looking into it, one might guess such an anthology to be a mere collection of doggerels upon medical subjects—sonnets to the aorta, triolets on breach presentations, *vers libre* to be intoned at autopsies. But here there is something far different, for the idea underlying it is that the physician is not a mere technician, interested only in his trade, but a man of the widest and most catholic of human sympathies—a man whose sympathies, by the very nature of his trade, must needs be wider than those of ordinary men. Within the expansive field

thus marked off, the compilers range rather boldly, but always, I suspect, with one eye on Osler himself. If they lean this way or that, it is as Osler leaned: toward whatever had a certain hoariness of age on it, and was not too brisk and literal. They admit a few poets of today, notably Siegfried Sassoon, W. B. Yeats and Edgar Lee Masters—the latter represented by some grandiloquent dithyrambs in his very worst manner—but there is far more from such ancients as Campion, Hogg, Waller, Herrick and Sir Walter Raleigh. Ben Jonson is not forgotten, and neither is Sir Philip Sidney. And to give a touch of strangeness there are some poems by men not often thought of as poets: W. E. H. Lecky, Laurence Alma-Tadema, Lord Houghton, and Osler's old pupil, Dr. William S. Thayer. Altogether, a curious and yet strikingly appropriate memorial to an extraordinary man. On some not distant tomorrow, let us hope, some American Brahms will find his Billroth, and dedicate a string quartette to him.

Dr. Garrison, first as man of letters among living American medical men, appears often as introducer or commentator in the new medical literature, particularly in the department of medical history, his specialty. Thus he provides a biographical sketch and other additions to the late Dr. Mortimer Frank's stately translation of Ludwig Choulant's classical treatise on the history of anatomical illustration. The book is superbly turned out by the University of Chicago Press; it would be difficult, indeed, to surpass the beauty of the type page or the clearness of the pictures. Choulant was a strange fellow—the son of a French cook settled in Germany. His great work first appeared in 1852; it opened a field for German medical historians which is now adorned by the distinguished labors of Dr. Karl Sudhoff. Since his time, of course, anatomical illustrating has been completely revolutionized, but if it is more accurate than it used to be it is certainly not often more brilliant, for among its early practitioners were such masters as

Rubens, Leonardo da Vinci, and Albrecht Dürer. Dr. Garrison appends a chapter on its latter-day development. Unluckily, he is confined perforce to purely anatomical illustration, and so makes no mention of the extraordinary surgical and pathological work of perhaps the greatest illustrator of them all, Prof. Max Broedel, of the Johns Hopkins Medical School. Broedel's drawings have never been surpassed for accuracy and clarity. They combine all the imaginative boldness of the early anatomical draughtsmen with a scientific knowledge that seems to be almost boundless. Nothing quite like them is to be met with in any other field.

What the late Dr. Frank did for Choulant, Dr. Francis R. Packard, of New York, does for "the father of modern surgery" in his "Life and Times of Ambroise Paré" (*Hoeber*), a large and very slightly volume, beautifully printed and illustrated. Modern surgery has had a great many fathers, but Paré probably had a better right to the title than any other. Born in 1517, and chiefly educated at the Hôtel Dieu, he became surgeon to four French kings, and died at the head of his profession. Medieval surgery, at that time, was slowly dying out, and observation and experiment were being substituted for the old reliance upon authority. Paré, for all his eminence, was not strong enough alone to upset authority altogether, but he managed to twist and torture it to his uses with the utmost ingenuity, and so he usually won in his combats with the blood-letters of the old school. His greatest contribution to surgery was the ligation of the blood-vessels following operation—not an idea that was original with him, but at all events one that he forced into acceptance. The other surgeons of the time employed the cautery. It stopped the flow of blood, but next day or the day after there was a hemorrhage and the patient usually died. Paré's patients more often lived to fight another day. With the gain, of course, there was some loss. The hot irons and boiling oil of the anti-Paréans were dangerous, but they

at least disinfected the wound; Paré's ligatures not infrequently set up fatal infections. It was, indeed, three centuries before this disadvantage was overcome by Lister. But on the whole, the ligature was vastly better than the cautery, not only because its actual death-rate was lower, but also because it was rational, and compelled the surgeon to study anatomy. . . . In this charming book Dr. Packard describes the brilliant and romantic background of the great surgeon's career, and then presents a translation of his "Apologie et Traité Contenant les Voyages Faits en Divers Lieux," an amazingly interesting record. I know of no other document, in truth, that gives a more vivid picture of war as it was carried on in the last days of feudalism, or that better visualizes the civilization of the time. Paré is tart, he is boastful, he is often more than a little disingenuous, but he is certainly never dull.

§ 2

The scarcity of sound musical criticism in English is made painfully apparent by the solemn publication of such rubbish as "Sir Edward Elgar," by J. F. Porte (*Dutton*). Porte is an Englishman, but the stuff that our own Hanslicks turn out is usually quite as bad, and often even worse. It is only once in a blue moon that a volume so competent as Huneker's "Chopin" or Henderson's "Wagner" appears among us. Most of the critics for the American newspapers seem to be quite unable to write books at all, and those who actually essay the business commonly turn out to be windy pedants, like Krehbiel, or propagators of nonsense, like Finck, with his praise of Massenet and his sneers at Richard Strauss. In recent years two younger men of promise have emerged from the sewers: Carl Van Vechten and Paul Rosenfeld. But Van Vechten, it becomes obvious, is too indolent and frivolous a fellow for so grewsome a trade: his book on Spanish music is amusing, but far from informing. As for Rosenfeld, he is still

too much wobbled by the Ornsteins and the Strawinskis to be able to write calmly about their betters. Both of these newcomers need a stiff course in the three B's, with four hours a day of five-finger exercises, and nothing to eat save *Schavarsbrot* and *Schwartenmagen*, the immemorial diet of musicians. Every Sunday might be devoted very profitably to an intensive study of the instrumental music of Josef Haydn, a man whose veriest grace-notes are worth all the desperate strivings of Strawinski. I have a notion that our musical critics suffer chiefly, not, as they say themselves, from hearing too much old music, but from hearing too much new. The great New York orchestras are now managed like circuses. Their conductors comb the world for novelties as P. T. Barnum used to comb it for human snakes and two-headed boys. Hence the frequent performance of such drivel as John Alden Carpenter's tone-poem on the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers—a composition which lately cost me a night's sleep. A man condemned to listen to such stuff evening after evening is bound to grow tone-deaf, and not only tone-deaf, but also very bilious.

The Porte book is full of almost unbelievable imbecilities. The banal "Enigma" variations of Elgar, it appears, "will always remain a monument of music," and "nothing, except some of the composer's other works, has surpassed them in loftiness of ideal and sheer personal magnitude." Exit the Fifth Symphony of old Ludwig! Overboard with the puerile four of Johannes Brahms! The two of Elgar are "the most monumental creations of their kind since Beethoven's day"; the first is "an immortal masterpiece"; both are "worthy to stand beside the greatest symphonic works extant." And so on, and so on. A belated make-weight, it would seem, for the neglect from which Elgar suffered for so long at home. He is certainly not a composer of the first rank, nor even of the second rank, but he has probably done the best writing for the orchestra that England has ever

produced. But it took a great while for the English critics to find it out. In the end, it was two Germans who put him in his proper place: Richard Strauss, who made a speech praising him, and Hans Richter, who played his works. The effects of the Strauss speech were electrical. Overnight Elgar became a famous man, and ever since then the English critics have been comparing him to Tschaiakowsky, Schumann and even Brahms. He forgot this debt to the Hun during the war. A serious book on him, intelligently done, would be very interesting. He has, in his moments, written some excellent music; at other times he has got down to the level of Mrs. H. H. A. Beach. Even the present tome will be of some value to his admirers, for it contains a complete list of his compositions, and a great deal of minor information about them. But as criticism it is beneath contempt.

The same sort of naïve hero-worship mars "Strindberg the Man," by Gustaf Uddgren, somewhat lamely translated by Prof. Dr. Axel Johan Uppval, of the University of Pennsylvania (*Four Seas*). In his "Black Flags," it appears, Strindberg created "a satirical work of art which is destined to live through centuries." This is sheer nonsense. It is highly improbable that anything created by Strindberg will live through centuries, or even through this present century, for nine-tenths of it is imitative and flabby, and a very fair portion of it is downright idiotic. As a Great Thinker, indeed, the picturesque Swede ranked with William Godwin, Bronson Alcott, Mary Baker G. Eddy and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. That is to say, he combined fluency and enthusiasm with an almost incomplete incapacity to distinguish between facts and mere appearances. Fully a half of his life was given over to pursuing chimeras—the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, and other such relics of medieval superstition. At more than one period he seemed to cross the line separating folly from downright insanity; at all times he was flighty, moody and full of childish fears and grievances. What he

wrote reflected his varying dementias; to read some of his books is a worse experience than reading the House proceedings in the *Congressional Record*. Strindberg, at one time, contemplated emigrating to the United States. His decision to stay in Europe was a great mistake. Here his peculiar lunacies would have won him serious attention, and he would have made a fortune in the chautauquas. At home he had a hard time of it, and it was not until toward the end of his life that his income was sufficient to give him ordinary comforts. His extreme earnestness cut him off from the popularity that rewarded Ibsen. Ibsen also toyed with ideas, but though they scandalized the bourgeoisie, they never showed any actual lunacy. Strindberg concerned himself with more gaudy nonsense. As I say, he missed his market. It is in the Republic that customers for that sort of monkey-doodle business are most numerous.

It is an amazing thing—and it throws a curious light upon the low state of criticism in the world—that both Ibsen and Strindberg were chiefly talked of, while they lived, as revolutionary thinkers, which neither was in fact, whereas the genuine talent which marked both of them was overlooked. It was this talent which actually made them interesting, but no one seems to have noticed it until they were dead. I allude to their extraordinary capacity as dramatic craftsmen, their great skill at making a stage-play live and move. Strindberg's "The Father" is perhaps one of the most cunning plays ever written. Within its short space he not only makes us believe that the nagging of a woman is enough to drive a man crazy; he shows the actual process, and gives to every detail of it an overwhelming reality. The difficulties of the feat become apparent if one examines any convenient play by a less adept dramatist. The average dramatist, in fact, finds it impossible in four acts to convince us that Ralph has really fallen in love with Geraldine. Strindberg, attempting to present a far more complex and baffling

sequence of events, gives it an air of almost perfect plausibility. The idea in the play, of course, is old and shopworn, but the dramatic treatment of it is superb. Ibsen showed the same skill in more than one of his dramas, notably "A Doll's House." What "A Doll's House" has to say is banal and obvious—even a baseball-player, a Fifth avenue rector or a newspaper editorial writer might have thought of it—but the way in which it is said is the way of genuine genius. I commend these two plays to the dramaturgic aspirants who now waste their time studying the outmoded technique of Scribe, as it is set forth so ponderously by puerile professors in innumerable text-books and college courses. It was Ibsen who discovered that the Scribe technique was piffle—that all it accomplished was to pump an idea dry of reality, and substitute the rules and motions of a silly game for its original dramatic force and persuasiveness. He revealed his new and better technique in "A Doll's House," beginning with the end of the second act—direct statement instead of jig-saw complication, simple emotion instead of plot, plain human beings in place of tortured marionettes. Strindberg, who was very jealous of Ibsen, smouched the idea for "The Father," and executed it with equal skill. Since then all dramatists worth mentioning have been imitating them. And imitating them no less in their merchanting of hollow and bombastic ideas, despite the plain fact that ideas have no more place in the drama than they have in music. What is the idea in "Hamlet"? For two hundred years pedants have been trying to find out. Or in "The Rivals"? Or in "Cyrano"? Or in "The Sunken Bell"?

§ 3

Evelyn Scott is a lady whose book of verse, "Precipitations," I praised in this place last Spring. Her first venture into prose, "The Narrow House," a novel (*Boni*), has been getting a good deal of attention during the Summer.

In general the newspaper reviewers seem to be afraid to commend it without careful reservations, chiefly because it is grim in tone. Well, what of it? So is "Miss Lulu Bett." So is Booth Tarkington's "Alice Adams." So is "Jennie Gerhardt." So, in fact, are nearly all the great novels of the world. This fear of grimness is a symptom of the vapid optimism, the thirst for gladness, the smirking cheeriness of a Y. M. C. A. secretary which lies over all of American letters, and all of American life. We have developed in the New World a civilization that appears to be perfectly satisfactory to half-wits, and so it is argued that it ought to be satisfactory to men and women of normal sense, and that there is something wrong with them if it isn't. As a matter of fact, the grimness of "The Narrow House" is not what principally ails it. The daily life of such a family as the Farleys is probably ten times as depressing as Miss Scott makes it out. The central trouble with the story is that it sometimes gets away from the author—that she is not yet the complete mistress of her manner. That manner, I daresay, owes a great deal to Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce. As it is revealed in "The Narrow House" it is still a bit sketchy and uncertain. In a few years it will begin to seem archaic. That is to say, it will be considerably developed—by Miss Scott herself and by other experimenters—and what is now vague about it will be clarified, and what is weak will be strengthened. It is a manner full of possibilities. The old-time novel, with its neat plot, its slow tempo and its discursive and undistinguished style, has begun to enter its dotage; there is probably nothing more to be pumped out of the form; it sickens as the epic sickened. The new novel will be at closer grips with life, and it will attempt a more succinct and vivid representation. There are passages in "The Narrow House" which show what is coming. With apparently simple means they achieve a truly startling brilliancy.

Most of them have to do with Alice

Farley, a subsidiary character. Miss Scott, indeed, is so successful with Alice that her other portraits, by contrast, descend to muddiness. Was there ever a more searching presentation of an unwilling virgin—her dreadful yearning for love, for the high adventure of sex, for the mere touch of a man's hand—her slow surrender to the massive and intolerable fact of her own lack of sexual charm? Put beside her, Lulu Bett becomes formal and theatrical, and even the old maid in "Winesburg, Ohio" begins to lose definition. The scenes of her agonized maiden meditation, her grotesque and yet poignant longing for her unattainable Horace, are all capitally done. After Alice, it seems to me that Miss Scott is most successful with the wife, Winnie. The type is too familiar to present any considerable difficulties. Winnie is simply the vampire of the movies brought down to the plane of sordid and everyday reality. She is what might be called professionally feminine. Her whole life is ordered in terms of what are commonly regarded as the romantic attributes of her sex. Her weakness is her weapon against all save her husband; upon him she operates with sexual provocations that would make a self-respecting street-walker blush. In the end she carries her pitcher to the well once too often. There are biological consequences to her last triumph over his effort to set himself free from her and regain his inner autonomy and integrity—and they lead seriatim to shock, collapse, coma, acidosis and death. The other personages of the tale have less clearness. Winnie's husband often withdraws into the shades of the enigmatical, her mother-in-law is sometimes quite as dim, her father-in-law oscillates between an amorous enterprise and a sense of duty that not infrequently fail to fit together, and her parents are simply stock company actors, particularly her father. The book, in brief, gets only about half way toward the author's apparent goal. But it is headed in the right direction, and it reveals a talent that deserves attention and respect. Miss Scott may never

write a novel of the first order, but it is quite certain that she will never write trash.

§ 4

"The Mirrors of Washington," by some anonymous psychologist (*Putnam*), is chiefly surprising because it is apparently the work of a Washington newspaper correspondent—and Washington newspaper correspondents, as a class, seem to be as incapable of writing intelligent books on politics, or even gathering the materials for them, as so many King Kleagles of the Ku Klux Klan. It is, indeed, very curious to observe what little part the men who are closest to the *haut politique* of the Republic take in its serious discussion. In all other countries men in like positions are not only political reporters, but also, in some sense, political philosophers, and their writings appear in the reviews, and have a ponderable influence upon the ebb and flow of political theory. But in the United States the typical Washington correspondent seldom rises above the level of a whisperer behind potted palms and listener at key-holes. He knows all about what the Senate finance committee is going to do next Wednesday, and why the President appointed John Smith prohibition enforcement agent in Colorado, and where Congressman Balderdash can be found at 1 A.M., and what Admiral Gog thinks of Admiral Magog, but in the larger sense he seems to have no ideas about the clash of men and principles, and very little accurate information. His correspondence to his paper seldom rises above the level of a superior sort of gossip. It avoids all fundamentals; it is bare of sharp and illuminating criticism; it accepts all transient eminence at its face value. If one would hear the Washington clown-show realistically and intelligently discussed one must turn to the political weeklies, which are written by young men who are seldom seen in Washington. If one would consult books upon the workings of the governmental

machine, or upon its history, one must be content with volumes by theorizing college professors. The Washington correspondents never write them.

Two things, I believe, contribute to this sterility. The first is the fact that what goes on politically in Washington is dispersed over so wide an area that the man who would keep sufficiently in contact with it for daily news purposes has no time left to think about it. In nearly all other civilized countries everything that is genuinely significant and important in the government is concentrated in the lower house of the national legislature. Not only are all the first-rate politicians of the nation there, but also the actual cabinet, and that cabinet is the essence of the government. But in the United States there are two houses of almost equal powers, with the salient politicians of the time divided between them, and the cabinet is unrepresented in either. As a result, the Washington correspondent must cover both houses, and in addition make himself familiar with nearly a dozen government departments, not to mention the White House. This business keeps him eternally on the jump. Instead of confining his work to the gallery and lobbies of one house, he must maintain contacts with at least a hundred different dispensers of news, nine-tenths of whom, of course, habitually lie to him. It is no wonder that, facing this grasshopper's job, he becomes a mere pipe for rumors, and is seldom accurately informed, save about trivialities. And it is no wonder that he never sits down to discuss the show in the serious and reflective manner of his European colleagues. He hasn't the time for it, even if the inclination could survive his daily head-spinning.

Another impediment that stands in the way is the dislike of American newspapers for hired men who have ideas of their own. This dislike has been growing very greatly of late, as the press of the country has come gradually under the hoof of capitalism. The aim of capitalism in thus gobbling the

public prints has been to regiment public opinion, and so make it safe. To that end the evasion of fundamental issues must be concealed behind a movie-show of personal gossip, banal rumor, and dull iteration of shibboleths. If the average Washington correspondent wrote the truth, as he occasionally sees it and sometimes even understands it, he would be out of a job next day. Human-like, he avoids facing that unpleasant fact by busying himself in other and less dangerous fields. What comes out of Washington in the way of news and comment is thus almost always standardized. No fresh point of view ever gets into it. It is, at bottom, always far more press-agentry than political writing. Sometimes it is press-agentry for a definite man or measure; more often it is simply press-agentry for the current delusions and superstitions, whatever they happen to be. During the war the Washington correspondents all became mere mobsmen, and intelligence departed from them utterly. The result was the huge carnival of stealing that now shows itself in the nation's tax-bills. They might have stopped much of that stealing if they had kept their independence. But all of them, until it was too late to do more than bawl, followed the parade like darkey-boys.

Thus "The Mirrors of Washington" is a strange book, for it shows reflection and it shows an obvious effort to tell the truth. The truth thus set forth, I believe, is chiefly sound enough. The analysis of the late Dr. Wilson is penetrating and convincing; there is a realistic discussion of the Hon. Mr. Harding; what is said about Root, Knox, Borah, Penrose and Hughes is better than anything that has ever been said before; there are capital chapters on such feeble fellows as Harvey, Hoover, Baruch, Lodge and House. In brief, a book of uncommon merit, and in most ways far better than "The Mirrors of Downing Street." If I knew who wrote it, it would be an unfeigned pleasure to embalm his name in print.

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